THE

HISTORY

OF

YSELF AND MY FRIEND,

A NOVEL:

BY

ANNE PLUMPTRE.

VOL. IV.

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"Un acte de vertu, un sacrifice ou de ses intérêts ou de soi-même, est le besoin d'une ame noble, l'amour-propre d'un cœur généreux, et en quelque sorte l'egoïsme d'un grand caractère."

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CHAPTER I.

Specimens of poetical embellishment.—An apology for the tardiness of their appearance.—Illustrations of the advantages to be derived from travelling.—A compact concluded.

Now had the brilliant star of day, the radiant Phœbus in his golden car passed a second time the equinoctial line in the year one thousand eight hundred and three, and commenced his travels in a southerly direction towards the Hivernian solstice. The vertical rays which he sheds over our happy island,—blest spot! most favoured country of the whole habitable globe! while he remains under the influence of the heavenly pair that inhabit the highest point of the orbit along which he is doomed eternally to wander, were felt no more. Those rays had long yielded to such as are darted more

obliquely in his route through the territories of the crooked Crab; and these again becoming more and more oblique, while visiting the noble Lion and the meek-eyed Virgin, had at length melted into the genial mildness dispensed while ranging through that portion of its circuit where Libra holds in nicest equipoise the balance between heat and cold. Nature, which had long been clothed in one unceasing universal hue of vivid green, now began to assume a more varied aspect. The stately oak, which lately raised its verdant head aloft to kiss the light and floating vapours as majestically they sail through the boundless ethereal concave;—those oaks, no longer verdant, now displayed a rich and motley foliage of tawny or bright yellow; yet even in their wane were seen a beauty and a richness not less seductive to the fancy than the charms which had adorned their youthful bloom;—while the reddened beech, the dusky ash, and the spotted sycamore, all lent their aid to form that beauteous combination, that harmony of colouring which distinguishes so far above the other seasons this mild benignant portion of the year. The labourer, released from those scorching rays lately darted on his enervated limbs, now cheerily pursued his daily course, transported at the suspension of that dire curse passed on the sins of

our first parents, that man should eat his bread by the sweat of his brow; nor less was the delight experienced, that as yet he suffered not from the other dread extreme of the revolving seasons, the chilling blasts of winter.

Reader, at this spot it first occurred to me that I had gone through three entire volumes of my work, and was arrived at my fourth, and, alas! last, volume, without having once thought of interspersing these cherished fruits of my labours with any thing like poetical embellishment. For so great an omission I sincerely entreat to be pardoned. I know that in these poetical days a history is scarcely worth reading, where the sun is only called the sun, and the moon the moon, where the seasons are only denominated by their plain John Trot names of spring, summer, autumn, and winter; and I am shocked when I reflect that hitherto they have never been otherwise described throughout these charming pages. Fearful, then, lest, from a deficiency in poetical imagery, my labours might be rather consigned to *obscurity* than honoured with *celebrity*,—and I have already sufficiently explained that *notoriety*, not *obscurity*, is the object I seek in the present publication;—apprehensive at least that my number of readers might fall somewhat short of twelve hundred thousand, if this im-

portant matter should be longer neglected, I resolved here to introduce such a portion of embellishment, as will, I trust, prove my sure passport to immortality. Indeed I thought that a more favourable opportunity could hardly be presented for its introduction, since it is very necessary that my readers should here clearly understand at what season of the year we are arrived.

"And pray now, good Mr. Poet, what season of the year might it be?—for, indeed, by your description that does not by any means appear clear to me."

Nay, now, my dear unpoetical friend, your question quite astonishes me;—you must indeed be very little conversant with poetical language, or with romance-writing language, which is much the same thing, not to know the season immediately. However, your question, mortifying as it is under some points of view, is consolatory in others. It is mortifying, on the ground that it carries with it an assurance of my description not being universally understood; it is consolatory, in the hope that since it is not intelligible it must be very poetical. At least, in judging by the high reputation which some modern poetry has attained, the characteristic feature of which certainly cannot be pronounced its *intelligibility*, we

may infer that the less there is of the latter character in poetry, the more truly poetical it must be. Therefore, my good friend, though you may not be sufficiently inspired to feel the entire beauty of the above passage, I am well assured, that all those of my readers who have true poetical souls will understand what season of the year I have intended to designate, much more clearly than if I had expressed myself in a plain downright way; and among my twelve hundred thousand readers I feel morally assured that nine tenths at least will have this poetical tact. For the information of the dull few, whose comprehensions are more imbued with the clouds and fogs so prone to hover over the atmosphere of this most favoured spot upon the whole habitable globe, I subjoin in plain terms that

Autumn was now far advanced, and the month of October near expiring, when a letter was received at New Lodge, announcing that the great Mr. Maurice Carberry had on the evening before writing landed at Falmouth, in company with the Earl of Borrowdale, the Countess Dowager of Borrowdale, and the two Lady Cliftons, her daughters; and that the whole party might be expected in London in a very few days. Mr. Carberry had not

long before been talking about removing to London for the winter, though he said he felt himself so happy and comfortable in the country, that he should leave it with great regret; he thought it right, however, on account of having masters for the children. But from the moment that Maurice's letter arrived, the subject was never mentioned again, nor did a single expression of pleasure escape his lips at the thought of seeing once more a son in whom he had long appeared to take so much delight.

Maurice had the grace, on not finding the family in Chatham Place, upon his arrival in town, to come down to New Lodge, putting on for the space of nearly a quarter of an hour a long dismal face, such as he thought suited to the first meeting with a parent who had recently sustained so severe a loss. His father received him with expressions of kindness; yet it was evident that his sensations were very different from what he had been accustomed to experience on being rejoined by his son after a separation. Though, since the latter had been in existence, he had never been absent for so long a time, or removed to such a distance, and it might therefore be expected that the father's joy at their re-union would be proportionably great; yet Mr. Carberry's eyes, as

they were first cast upon his son, were much rather expressive of chagrin than of satisfaction.

A quarter of an hour was, however, quite as long as our count, now more count-like than ever, could keep up the farce of a face of sadness: his features then began to assume a pretty simper, while he entered upon a criticism of the house, the garden, the inhabitants, and every thing connected with the place. There was no *gusto* in any thing; and really, after having spent so many months in dear dear Italy, England was quite insupportable. Of Paris he had little to say: it had no court to boast of: consequently there could be no *ton*, nothing distinguished, nothing worth a gentleman's concerning himself about. But at Rome, at Naples, at Lisbon, he had been perfectly enchanted; and if his father would but consign the direction of things to him, he would soon make of New Lodge a villa, which should hardly be exceeded by the Villa Albano itself. He had bought a few trifling objects of *gusto* in different parts of Italy, which he expected would be in England soon, and if he might have the disposal of them——

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Mr. Carberry; but it was half muttered to himself, half spoken aloud, and did not interrupt the oration.

If he might but have the disposal of them, New Lodge would soon become one of the most fashionable places within forty miles round London for elegant parties to come to as a sight. "Oh, dear Miss Middleton, how vestly delighted you would be with that! should you not?"

"Pshaw!" again exclaimed Mr. Carberry emphatically, while Katherine observed a profound silence.

"I can assure you, Miss Middleton, though the Earl of Borrowdale has great taste and judgement, yet the Italians all said that he had by no means the fine feeling in such matters that I have; it was indeed a pleasure, they said, to talk with me, to show me any object of virtù."

"I suppose you took some pains, as I desired you," said Mr. Carberry, "to inquire into the government and laws of the countries you visited? You attended the courts of justice, no doubt, and made yourself thoroughly acquainted with the several modes in which it is administered, so that you will be perfectly qualified to speak upon these subjects when you are in parliament?"

"O dear, yes, sir.—I could not indeed attend quite so much to such things as I wished; for, you know, when one is with ladies, they must be the first objects of our attention.

Sometimes, when I should have been very happy to have devoted an hour or two to study, Lady Paulina and Lady Amenda wanted me to go out with them; and that you know, my dear sir, it was impossible to refuse. However, I bought some books, which will instruct me sufficiently in any thing I want to know when I am to speak in parliament."

"You went, however, once or twice a week to the courts of law, both at Paris and at Rome?"

"I really cannot say,—perhaps not quite so often."

"How often did you go, then?"

"Positively, sir, I did not keep an account; I had no idea that I should be questioned so very closely."

"Did you ever go at all?"

"Dear, sir, how can you ask such a question?"

"Come, tell the plain truth, you never did?"

"O, indeed, sir, that is a mistake."

"Well, then, in the whole course of your travels how often were you in a foreign court of justice?—That is a plain question, and I desire to have a plain answer to it."

"Why—why—I believe once."

"And that was—"

"At Paris."

"But at Rome, never?"

"Why, really, sir, you have no idea how one's time is taken up abroad. People that have never travelled themselves have such odd notions,—they fancy one has so much time to spare for all sorts of things. But, my dear sir, I must again observe, that when one is with a party, one must be governed a little by them, especially when there are ladies concerned. I could not possibly ask Lady Paulina and Lady Amenda to go with me and hear dull trials; and it would have been excessively rude to them for me to have been always going one way and they another."

"Yes, I always told you what would come of travelling in company with such people; that you would never spend your time and money in any way at all profitable, that both would be entirely wasted."

"Indeed, sir, you are vestly mistaken; my time could never have been spent more profitably; you cannot imegine how many excellent connections I have formed, which will be of the utmost importance to me."

"Among persons of distinction in—"

"Of the very highest distinction, I can assure you, sir."

"Please to let me speak, and not answer till my question is finished. I don't mean to

ask whether you formed connections with your people of distinction about the court, your nobles, and your duke of this trumpery place, and count of the other. But were you acquainted with persons eminent for their attainments in science and literature, such as would improve your mind, and give you ideas that may assist in gaining you distinction as a man of talents in your own country?"

"My dear, sir, you have such very extraordinary notions! I assure you, I should never have been thought half so much of if I had gone poking about after musty attainments as they are called, as in spending my money freely like a gentleman. You have no idea how much more you are respected abroad, and how much more glad every body is to see you, when you dash away a little, than when you seem come only to scrutinize this and scrutinize that, and investigate all their private concerns, which, after all, are no business of yours."

Mr. Carberry bit his lips, turned first to one side of his chair, then to the other,—thrust the poker into the fire, and raked it half out,—looked out at the window, as if something engaged his attention very earnestly,—and at length took up his hat, and walked away to the farm-yard.

"You must have received infinite gratification from your travels, Mr. Carberry?" said Katherine.

"O, you cennot imegine, Miss Middleton, what a delightful tour we have had! I never was more mortified than to be obliged to come home: I wished a stiletto in the heart of that demned Corsican with his decrees."

"You must have seen many most sublime sights? You were no doubt upon the top both of Vesuvius and Ætna?"

"He! he! he!—I admire your rustic notions, Miss Middleton. As if people of renk could trouble their heads about mountains and such common kind of objects;—things which the poorest lezzeroni in the streets of Naples can see every day."

"You perhaps rather turned your attention to objects of art?—and I am told, that notwithstanding the numbers which have been transported to Paris, there are still many well worth seeing at Rome."

"I cen't say, indeed, I never inquired."

"You no doubt saw St. Peter's church?"

"O yes."

"And were charmed with it?"

"I believe it may be very well in its way, but I did not concern myself much about it."

"You were, however, much delighted with the Capella Sistina? for that is universally admired."

"I don't recollect that I saw it." Katherine here winked at me.

"Perhaps you rather studied the antiquities,—you were more attracted by the Colosséo?"

"O dear! that's nothing but a heap of ruins." Again Katherine gave me a sly wink.

"You mentioned having made some purchases, Mr. Carberry,—may one be permitted to inquire of what nature?"

"I really do not very well know myself. A man told me he had a number of curious things to sell remarkably cheap; and Lady Amenda said she thought I had better make a bargain for them at once, as all my friends would expect me to carry little presents over for them. So I told the man he might peck them up: and Lady Amenda said they might as well be sent with their things, and all could be directed to the Earl of Borrowdale's. She might very likely, she said, be glad to take some part of my purchase off my hands, and we could settle all about it when we got home."

"Did you see the Queen of Naples?"

"O yes! for she is excessively fond of the English, especially when they are persons of renk, such as I had the honour of accompany-

ng. We were all introduced to her mejesty the very day after we got to Naples; and a most charming woman we found her. She was particularly polite and condescending to me, so that I really thought the Earl of Borrowdale was a little jealous of me. And would you believe it, Miss Middleton? she always called me Milord Carberry: indeed, wherever I went I was always called Milord; which I thought exceedingly polite and obliging. But it was certainly very natural, as I was with a lord, to suppose me one myself. We were several times at court; indeed we had got quite intimate with her mejesty: she could scarcely have been more sociable if we had been her perfect equals; and she seemed excessively sorry to part with us when we went to take leave."

So, then, the great fruit of all the expense which had been incurred in these travels was the honour of having made an acquaintance with her Neapolitan majesty; for as to any of the objects which usually attract the attention of travellers, our man of rank seemed to know much less of them than we did ourselves, who had never been near them.

Several examinations of a similar kind did he undergo in the course of a week that he now spent at New Lodge, the result of which afforded no satisfaction either to the examiner

or the examined; and the conclusion of the whole matter was, that Mr. Carberry hoped his son would now go back to his chambers in Lincoln's Inn, and make up by his attention to his studies for all the time he had lost. This the count promised to do very faithfully, on condition that his father would pay a pretty large demand as the winding up of his travelling expenses. In it, I suppose, was included the bargain of curiosities purchased at the recommendation of Lady Amanda, and which Katherine and I agreed in presuming, whether worth little or much, having once found their way into the Earl of Borrowdale's house, would never get out again. Mr. Carberry, in engaging to pay this money, fairly warned the count that he must put some restraint upon his extravagance, since he could not, nor would not, go on answering the heavy demands which he had made upon him for the last two years: he had others to provide for besides himself; and he should not suffer one child to squander away the whole property, and make beggars of the rest.

CHAPTER II.

Mortification and disappointment at length arrived at their acmé, and the effects resulting from them.—A warm friendship dissolved.—Difficulties started in forming a matrimonial connection, and how surmounted.

But it soon appeared that our travelled gentleman, though ready at making promises, was slow at performing them. He returned indeed to his chambers; but since it was necessary to display the advantages which a man gains by foreign travel, he ran into ten times the foolish expenses he had ever done before; so that in a few months there was scarcely less money squandered in doing credit to himself as a person returned from his travels, than had been lavished in a like portion of time during his absence.

Mr. Carberry remained the whole winter at New Lodge, often talking of coming to town; but unable to prevail upon himself to quit the retirement to which he every day grew more and more attached. Disappointed in all his prospects with regard to his son, since every day's experience only brought to his mind a stronger conviction that his real character was that of a coxcomb and a spendthrift, from

whom no good was ever to be expected;—unable to conquer his deep regret for the loss of his wife, notwithstanding the assiduous endeavours of Katherine to supply her place to him, and the deep sense he entertained of her exemplary conduct;—full of these feelings, he had every day less and less relish for society; the retirement in which he lived grew every day more and more dear to him. Even the newspaper ceased to charm. His political hobby-horse had always been associated with the idea of his son's becoming a great parliamentary orator; and since these ideas were all disappointed, whatever had any reference to them only awakened painful sensations in his bosom. His garden, his plantations, and some little farming concerns, with the society of his daughter-in-law and his two younger children, and sometimes that of the Shelburne family and myself,—for to this society he still wholly confined himself;—these objects formed his entire occupation and amusement. Mr. Armstrong would fain have had him come with his whole family for a while to Langham, as a little variety; but he could not prevail upon himself even to go thither.

To this almost monastic seclusion Katherine, though just at the age when a young woman is generally the most eager after the gaieties and

pleasures of the world, persevered in conforming herself with the most exemplary cheerfulness and good humour. Her conduct indeed in every respect showed a mind so thoroughly well regulated, that it could not fail of exciting the warmest admiration among the limited number of persons by whom it was witnessed, and by whom alone it could be duly appreciated. Not a look, not a word of repining, or of any thing that bore the most distant resemblance to it, ever escaped her; never was there the slightest relaxation in her attention to her father-in-law and her brother and sister. As formerly she had endured with the most exemplary patience the tedium of reading the newspaper, while that had been Mr. Carberry's favourite amusement; now that it was superseded by the garden and the farm, she would with equal patience follow him about for hours together, as he always wished to have her and the children with him as much as possible. She entered with an interest apparently equal to his own, into all his little plans for alterations and improvements, assisting in the cultivation of his flowers, and doing numberless little things which she conceived would be a gratification to him. Ah! could I see all this, and then command myself not to love her?—No, that was impossible! It was not without keeping the

most constant and unremitted guard over myself, that I could so far control my feelings as to abstain from making any declaration of my love.

For indeed, if I had been disposed to it, opportunities were not wanting to me, even frequent opportunities. Mr. Carberry was more than ever desirous of having me with him; and but for his intention of giving up the management of the business entirely to me,—so that he thought it right that half my time, at least, should be devoted to it,—he would, I believe, gladly have established me as a regular inmate in his house, under the ostensible title of preceptor to his son. I was, however, constantly down on a Sunday, and once besides in the middle of the week: nay, in the summer, when the long days would permit of my riding down in the morning and returning at night, I was frequently there twice besides the Sunday.

The new extravagancies into which Maurice had this winter launched, notwithstanding his promises of amendment, impressed his poor father's mind every day more and more forcibly with the melancholy conviction that all ideas of his reformation were hopeless. He therefore began to consider it as an imperious duty on his own part to oppose some efficient barrier against the consequences which must inevitably

result from the continuance of such a career. The whole winter passed without Maurice's making any attempt to come down and see his father, or seeming to recollect that there was such a person in existence, excepting when he wanted to get money from him. He was only brought down to New Lodge in the month of April, by a positive refusal on Mr. Carberry's part to furnish him with a supply which he demanded.

Some very sharp altercations now took place between the father and son; when Maurice, assuming a tone on which he had hitherto never ventured, began to reproach his father in very bitter terms, asserting that the life he led was the necessary consequence of the education which had been given him. Could it be supposed, he said, when he was put to such a school, that any thing was intended but to make him a man of leisure and of pleasure? for he was sure nothing was to be learnt there excepting how to idle away time and spend money. If his father wished to make him a man of business, he should have sent him elsewhere; but since he had chosen to give him the education which had fixed his present habits upon him, he expected to be supported in them, for they were now too deeply rooted to be abandoned. His father, therefore, must not suppose that he

would ever control himself in any of the expenses of a gentleman, and he should certainly expect to see the debts he incurrred in this way regularly paid.

This, it must be confessed, was speaking in pretty plain terms; and it at length roused effectually any remains of apathy which were still lurking in Mr. Carberry's bosom. He immediately formed the resolution of making his son an allowance, beyond which he would never be answerable for any debts he might incur, and to notify his determination to tradespeople and others that they might be upon their guard, and not give him the unlimited credit they had done hitherto. He consulted Mr. Shelburne upon the allowance proper to be made, and it was fixed at six hundred pounds a year; a sum which Mr. Shelburne said he thought very liberal, even considering the manner in which Maurice had been educated. If it had not been that he really thought his education had led almost inevitably to his taking a very expensive turn, he should have thought such a sum wholly unreasonable. The count grumbled exceedingly: but Mr. Carberry was resolute; he said that he must never expect from him a sixpence beyond this sum, and his determination was signified to all those among whom his son's money had been usually spent.

The first consequence of such an arrange-

ment was, that he ceased to be the same welcome guest as before in the Borrowdale family. Since there was no further hope of his father's coffers supplying half the expenses, at least, of their establishment, they no longer found the same interest in receiving him at the house. They were now, therefore, often out when he called; and more than once, when he went to the evening parties, he was informed that something had prevented the party taking place; though, as he drove off from the door, he perhaps saw another carriage full of company stop and gain admittance. Mortified to the last degree, and too silly to conceal his mortification, he again reproached his father, telling him that the breaking off this intimacy was one of the first blessed effects of his œconomizing plans; that indeed he could not condemn the Countess Dowager, for one who could not spend more than six hundred a-year certainly was not a proper acquaintance for her daughters. But it was hard enough upon him, tenderly attached as he now was to Lady Amenda, and having good reason to hope that he had made an equal impression upon her heart, to find himself separated from her for ever.

To all this farrago Mr. Carberry only replied, that he was exceedingly glad the acquaintance was at an end; and sincerely hoped that any other connections he might have of a similar

description would be equally so. He should think this one of the happiest effects that could possibly arise from the plan he had adopted, and please himself with the idea that it might lead in time to his getting into society more creditable and profitable to him. Maurice burst out of the room in a rage; banged the door in his father's face, and went away.

To comply with his father's wishes in any way was now, however, wholly out of the question; and since he found himself irretrievably banished from the society of the Borrowdale family, the only thing that remained was, to seek out any other as nearly similar as possible, into which he could gain admittance. It was now the high season at Weymouth, and he thought he would try what was to be done there. To Weymouth then he bent his course, preparing himself for the occasion by building a new curricle upon a particularly elegant construction. This was obtained from the coachmaker upon the assurance, that notwithstanding the declaration made by his father, there was no doubt whatever of his paying for it. He knew him well, he said, and was confident that by a little coaxing he might be prevailed on at any time to pay all his bills; so he had no fear of incurring debts, otherwise he would upon no consideration think of a tradesman's running

any risk on his account. Upon the strength of this assurance the coachmaker undertook the job, and the curricle was completed; while a pair of superb horses having been obtained by similar means, away drove the spark: nor did his father know any thing of what was going forward till he received a letter from him dated at Weymouth. The better to supply himself with the funds necessary for appearing there as a gentleman, he had recourse to the accommodating tribe of Duke's Place, and obtained a loan on the moderate condition of repaying it fourfold at his father's death.

At the time of his arrival at Weymouth, the whole town was exceedingly occupied with a very beautiful girl, who was there with her father and mother, and who was chronicled as an only child and a very rich heiress. Between her beauty and her reputed fortune, the beaux of the place were half wild in running after her, and Maurice soon became one of the most assiduous of her followers; while, to the no small gratification of his amour-propre, no one seemed honoured with a greater share of her favour. Nor was this surprising; since, if any judgement was to be formed by the profuse manner in which his money was squandered, he must be as rich an heir as she was an heiress: not one among the dashers by whom

this place of fashionable resort is usually frequented exceeded him in extravagance. The preference, indeed, which the lady showed for him was so very decided, that in a short time all idea of competition was given up by his rivals, and he remained sole master of the field. This he, in the humility of his heart, ascribed entirely to his own transcendent merits; and it increased in no slight degree his admiration of his fair, that she had displayed so much judgement in appreciating them.

An awkward rumour had, however, by some means or other after a while crept into circulation, that it was not easy to ascertain in what the lady's great fortune consisted; and ill-natured people insinuated that this idea had no small influence in inducing the rivals so easily to give up the conquest. It was thought that, if satisfaction could have been obtained on this point, Maurice would not have had to boast so easy a victory; that, in short, he was only left the Jason to carry away the fleece, because it was feared that, instead of the prize proving a golden one, it would appear to be of very ordinary wool. Maurice, however, always declared that he considered the altered rumours with regard to the lady's expectations, as mere ill-natured fabrications too contemptible to be worthy of a moment's attention. All other considera-

tions apart, he had therefore on this account a sufficient claim to distinction from the lady; and perhaps it was to this that the distinction she showed him was principally to be ascribed. Be this as it may, the fact was, that by the time she had been two months at Weymouth, Maurice was the only one among her once numerous train of admirers who remained faithful. From this circumstance, added to the change which her father and mother found in the behaviour of almost all people, the trading part of the community in particular, from the ideas which had got abroad respecting the disproportion between their real and their reputed circumstances, they all grew tired of Weymouth, and suddenly removed to Bath.

As the intention, however, of making this movement had not been confided by them to any body till the moment when it was to be carried into execution, Maurice only knew of it by a billet of adieu which he received after they were actually upon the road. Enamoured as he was, and still confident that the rumours respecting the lady's deficiency in fortune were altogether malicious, he lost no time in following the fugitives; but ordering the curricle to be instantly made ready, away he posted; and overtaking them on their route, they entered Bath nearly at the same moment, having agreed to join

company entirely, and settle themselves together in the same lodgings.

Three days had scarcely passed over their heads in this new situation, when the count's proposals were made in due form to the lady. She declared her readiness to accept them, but said that the whole matter must be referred to her father. It was so accordingly: but, unluckily, before he would suffer any thing like an engagement to take place, he inquired what settlement the gentleman could make, and seemed not exceedingly delighted to find that he was wholly dependent upon his father. He however made no objection to Mr. Carberry's being consulted; and Maurice wrote to him accordingly, stating that the lady was a very large fortune, and hoping that he would not from any *sordid views* stand in the way of his forming so advantageous a connection.

Mr. Carberry was certainly not particularly pleased with some expressions in this letter: he however returned for answer, that if he could be satisfied as to the lady's fortune being real, and not imaginary, he would be very ready to do whatever was proper for his son. But he observed that such places as Weymouth and Bath always abounded with fortune-hunters of both sexes; and it must be made very clear to him that this lady was not of that description,

before he would do any thing to promote the union. Indeed, upon the face of what his son had written concerning the matter, it appeared to him that there was great reason to suppose her some pretty pennyless girl, whom her parents were carrying about to public places to show her off, in hopes that her beauty might catch some young man who had more money than wit.

This answer was as little pleasing to Maurice as the terms in which his application was couched had been to Mr. Carberry; and he took a solitary ride in his curricle to commune with himself in what way observations so ungracious could be communicated, so as to render them at all palatable to his beloved fair and her dear parents. At his return from the ride, however, he found that he might have spared himself this trouble, since during the short interval of his absence, (and he had scarcely been gone three hours,) father, mother, and daughter had all silently stolen away, without having advertised any soul in the place of the route they had taken.

Indeed, it now appeared that, whatever might be their riches, with regard to the miserable dross through which the wants of mankind, whether natural or artificial, are principally supplied, they were at least in one of the richest

gifts of nature lamentably deficient, viz. in good memories. Theirs were so very indifferent, that they actually went away wholly forgetting to pay for their lodgings, as well as to settle some other little reckonings which ought previously to have been discharged; even forgetting, moreover, to leave their address; so that there was no means of reminding them of their other acts of forgetfulness. A still more extraordinary instance of it was, their actually not recollecting that a parcel of notes to the amount of about fifty pounds, which Maurice had carelessly left in a drawer, were not their own,—so that they had carried them away. Nay, it appeared afterwards that their memories had been no less treacherous in their quitting Weymouth; and what is more extraordinary than all, it was whispered that their present movement was occasioned by a hint having reached them, that some skilful operator was kindly coming over from Weymouth, in hopes of administering a remedy to this defect. So unwilling are persons frequently to submit to the discipline by which alone the evils they labour under can be cured!

This little affair did not contribute very much towards increasing the harmony between the father and the son. The expression of *sordid views* was certainly not very conciliating to the

former, nor was the allusion to *young men who had more money than wit* particularly palatable to the latter Maurice, indeed, only felt the more piqued at it, since the event seemed fully to have justified the suspicions expressed. Even he could scarcely now entertain a doubt as to the true light in which the trio were to be viewed. Two or three angry letters passed upon the subject, in which he complained bitterly, that it was very hard he was to be treated as a child all his life, and was to be presumed not capable of judging for himself upon any subject. If he had been deceived in this instance, his father might suppose that he should have investigated the circumstances and character of the people fully before the matter was brought to a conclusion: he even insinuated that his father not only restricted him very unreasonably in his expenses, but wanted besides to stand in his way in any eligible connection he was desirous of forming. Mr. Carberry felt this impertinence very sensibly; and grew more and more harassed and perplexed every day as to what was ultimately to be done with him.

As yet he had made no alteration in his will since the loss of his wife; but the more he saw of Maurice's misconduct, the more he felt it a duty incumbent upon him not to delay arranging his affairs in such a manner as to place

his other children entirely out of any danger of suffering from it in case of his death. Accordingly, as Mr. Shelburne and his family came down to spend their Christmas at New Lodge, that of 1804, Mr. Garberry took this opportunity of talking the matter over fully with him. Having stated to him the distributions he wished to make of his property, a will was immediately drawn up under all the requisite forms, which he executed without delay, and consigned to Mr. Shelburne's care.

CHAPTER III.

Very unexpected changes in the situation of several of the principal characters in this drama.—An excellent example not thrown away.—Acts of disinterestedness.

It has been my lot in the course of this History, to record the deaths of so many persons connected with it, that the work may be said to bear somewhat the appearance of a mortuary register. Such, however, is the history of human life itself. The great book of fate is but a register of mortality; and he who would chronicle nature, such as it really is, not under the flattering and delusive colours in which the imaginations of many writers have delighted to dress it, will find that he is perpetually obliged to record the separation of persons the most dear to each other, by this power to which we all must bend. Yes, too often, alas! has my pen been obliged to digress from the more enlivening scenes to which alone I would gladly have devoted these pages, if that could have been done consistently with drawing the faithful portrait of nature from which I was resolved never to deviate;—too often have I been obliged to turn from these and give sketches of a more gloomy nature, to paint those death-bed

scenes which even the most happy must sometimes witness,—to which the wretched look as their last, their only hope;—nor am I yet at the end of this melancholy part of my task.

We have seen Mr. Carberry, in the last chapter, making his will;—the lot of the present will be to record that it was with reason he considered this as a duty not to be delayed. Not that it was made from any presentiment of what was so soon to follow; it was from no impulse or inspiration that he acted; it was from a deep sense of the misconduct of his eldest son, and a strong feeling how much he should be wanting in the duty of a parent, if he were not effectually to prevent his younger children being injured by it. There was then no reason to suppose his end approaching; he was only in his sixtieth year, and had enjoyed a very good state of health,—while the course of life to which he had taken might rather have been presumed a means of contributing towards that enjoyment being continued to him. The only appearance of indisposition about him were some occasional slight symptoms of the gout, but they had never hitherto assumed an aspect that could give any just cause of alarm.

In the spring, however, after he had made his will, that is, in the month of May 1805, he was suddenly seized with a violent attack

of the gout in his head and stomach, which, notwithstanding that the best medical advice was immediately sent for from London, carried him off after an illness of only four days. Almost from the first moment of his attack his senses were gone; so that Katherine immediately sent to beg of Mr. Shelburne to come down, as a friend and assistant to her in case of the worst, and he suggested the propriety of Maurice's being sent for. A messenger was accordingly dispatched for him: but he was not in town; he was gone down on a visit to a friend at Cambridge, and only arrived at New Lodge a few hours before his father expired.

He could not, however, wait till he had breathed his last, before he took upon himself to assume a tone of command, as if he had been already master of the house, giving his orders among the servants with a very dictatorial air, and demanding that his father's keys should be immediately given up to him. Mr. Shelburne could not forbear hinting that there was a sort of indelicacy in this conduct, and that he had better wait till he was sure he was the master, before he assumed the tone of one. On this, Maurice observed, that if he was not now to be considered as master, he did not know who was; he had no desire to turn

Middleton, and his brother and sister, into the street—they should be welcome to stay for any reasonable time, till they were provided with a habitation; but as to giving orders, Miss Middleton must not suppose that she would be permitted to rule the roast as she had hitherto done. Mr. Shelburne again hinted that it would be time enough to arrange these matters when poor Mr. Carberry was absolutely gone, and his will should be known; till then he did not see that any one could with propriety interfere with the order established in the house. Maurice was exceedingly piqued; but, not knowing how much Mr. Shelburne was in the secret, still showed the same confidence as to his being ultimately master there, and said it was no matter, a few hours would soon show whether the natural heir of the dying man was any longer to be dictated to by interlopers in the family.

The moment then that Mr. Carberry had actually expired, Maurice again demanded the keys, that he might, as he said, search for a will. "It is needless," said Mr. Shelburne, "I have it in my possession; it was intrusted to my care immediately on its being made."

Maurice looked all astonishment. "It is [illegible]" Mr. Shelburne said, "that Miss Mid[illegible] and Mr. Danville should be present

when the will is read; they are both nearly concerned in it." Maurice muttered, and knit his brows. I happened to be down at the time of Mr. Carberry's seizure, and never quitted his bedside from that moment till the period when my further attendance could not be of any avail. I had not left the room many minutes, and was endeavouring to soothe and comfort the two poor children, who were in deep distress at the idea of their papa being dead, and that they should never see him again, when I received a summons to attend at the reading of the will, as Maurice was too impatient to endure its being longer delayed.

The substance of the will was, Imprimis, that the allowance of six hundred pounds a year, which Mr. Carberry had engaged to give Maurice, was confirmed to him, and a sum was allotted for the purchase of an annuity to that amount. It was placed in the hands of Mr. Shelburne, Mr. Armstrong, and myself, as trustees, and was to be paid at the rate of fifty pounds a month, the trustees having a power, in the case of debts, which could be proved honest on the part of those towards whom they were incurred, of keeping back, from time to time, such parts of the payment as were necessary to answer these [illegible]
A further sum of a thousand pounds [illegible]

towards the discharge of any debts which he might then owe: if, however, usurious engagements had been contracted, they were only to be paid to the amount of the sum actually borrowed, with the legal interest. If the whole thousand pounds was not wanted for the payment of debts, the remainder was to be given to Maurice.

A further sum of six thousand pounds was set apart to remain in the hands of the trustees, with a discretionary power, that if at any time Maurice should appear really to be reformed, and should be living a regular and respectable life, having married in a creditable way, they should allow him the further income arising from it; till such period the interest to accumulate, and with the principal to form a provision for any family he might have. If he never reformed, nor married creditably, so that the trustees could not consider themselves as authorized to make him a further allowance, the whole sum accumulated to go among any illegitimate children he might have, the trustees having a power of appropriating any part of it they judged proper to the education of such children. If the money should never be wanted for any of these purposes, then to be ultimately distributed among the residuary legatees or their heirs.

In the provisions here made, Mr. Garbett said, that he considered himself as awarding to his eldest son as large a share of his property as he was fairly entitled to, considering all that had been paid for him within the last five years, which he was ashamed to say was little less than twenty thousand pounds. That he had been himself weak enough to sacrifice such sums to his son's extravagance, he confessed lay heavy upon his mind; but he thought it right to acknowledge his weakness, that it might not appear to the world as if he had sacrificed his eldest son to making a more ample provision for his younger children: it would now be evident that he should have been guilty of injustice towards the younger ones, if the eldest had been put upon an equal footing with them.

New Lodge, with the furniture, plate, books, linen, and estate annexed to it, were left to his son Edward; with the option to Katherine of living in the house, rent free, if she should choose it, till her brother was of age. Specific legacies of ten thousand pounds each were left to Katherine and Sophia. The whole concerns in the coal trade were to be disposed of, with a reserve to me, till the sale, of an eighth share of the business,—the share to which I was to have been admitted in three months.—or any

choice of a legacy of five thousand pounds in lieu of it, which ever I should prefer. The sole care of her sister was left to Katherine, with a request that, wherever she fixed, her house might be a home for her brother to come to in the holidays,—a proper allowance being made to her for it. The guardianship of Edward was left to Mr. Shelburne and Mr. Armstrong; and to them I was added as a trustee of the property, being, as Mr. Carberry stated, better able to take an active part in the management of the affairs than Mr. Armstrong; and I was to superintend the coal business in conjunction with Mr. Fenton, till it was disposed of. The furniture of the house in Chatham Place was left to Katherine; and the residue of the property was to be equally divided between her, Edward, and Sophia. Mr. Shelburne, Mr. Armstrong, and myself, were left executors.

It is to be observed, that so much money had been expended within a few years in the purchase of New Lodge, with the property annexed to it, (which was about fifteen hundred a year,) and the sums paid for Maurice, that not more money remained at Mr. Carberry's death than was sufficient for the pur- [illegible] Maurice's annuity [illegible] all the other lega[illegible], the coal business was responsible.

This was estimated at about forty thousand pounds, including the ships and wharfs, which were all Mr. Carberry's own property; so that there would be amply sufficient to pay every thing, and leave a division of two or three thousand pounds each to the residuary legatees.

Such were the leading features of this will. Some small legacies were left to the servants, and to two or three friends, but to no amount worth mentioning out of a fortune so considerable. Maurice looked like one thunderstruck as he heard it read: the possibility of such a distribution of the property seemed never to have entered into his ideas; he seemed to have considered it as a matter of course, that his father must make him the principal heir. He became pale with rage, and starting from his seat, "Very well," he said, "since such was the case, he saw no further business that he had there, they must settle things their own way: he should, however, expect the expenses of his journey to be paid, as they had been pleased to send for him so unnecessarily. Indeed he could not regard the being sent for at all in any other light than as a positive insult, since they were so well aware of the treatment he was to receive. He could not afford, out of the pitiful provision made for h[illegible] dancing after them; neither should [illegible] give

himself any concern about attending the funeral. He thought what would come of Miss Middleton's being set up in the manner she had been, and of her being made mistress of the house; she had feathered her own nest well, at least." With these remarks, he hastily left the room, and set off post for London, muttering to himself, as he went away, something which seemed like a menace, "that their triumph might, however, very possibly be but short-lived."

Katherine was deeply affected with the whole scene, not less with the noble provision made for her by her father-in-law, and the kind expressions towards her with which it was accompanied, than with the grossly indecent behaviour of Maurice, and the insinuations so cruelly thrown out against herself. For my part, Mr. Carberry's generosity to me was much beyond what I could have any reason to expect; and I felt exceedingly flattered by the confidence he had placed in me, by leaving me one of the executors and trustees of his children's property.

As no particular directions were left with regard to the funeral, it seemed a matter of course to bury him in the vault by his wife; [illegible] he was accordingly interred on the 85[illegible] after his death. Two days after I

went down in haste to Langham, my mothe
being ill; and as she was exceedingly alarme
about herself, she became very desirous of see-
ing me. I stayed about ten days, by whic
time I had the satisfaction of seeing her pe
fectly recovered.

I had of course written to my father an
mother as soon as I knew of Mr. Carberry'
generosity to me; and it became a matter o
frequent discussion between my father and my-
self during my stay with him. "Well, t
be sure, Sam," said he, "nobody could hav
expected Mr. Carberry to have done such grea
things for you, being that you were no way
a kin to him; and 'tis not many people, it's
my thought, that would have had a heart to
be so good. Though, for certain, he had
made you a sort of a son like, because, poo
man! he had no comfort of his own son, which
that is a very shocking thing to think of, that
a child could be so ungrateful and undutiful to
such a kind father. And which, do you think,
you shall choose, Sam, the five thousand pound,
or the share of the business?"

"Why, father, I mean to consult about
that with you and Mr. Armstrong."

"Aye, I think you are quite right, Sam, to
consult with Mr. Armstrong; for
be a better ge, and I'm sure w
give

thinks, that will be the best. Five thousand pound is indeed a very fine thing; and if you was to choose that, Sam, then I can see no reason why you couldn't go back to college, and be a clergyman at last, though perhaps you would not like that neither. But then every body must think that it would make a great difference, because you would have something mean time that you were waiting for a living; and for that matter, it's my thought that with five thousand pound you might buy yourself a living, and then you would be able to marry, and support a family all the same as if you had continued in the coal trade. But, moreover, as to the coal trade, why, perhaps, you may think that you would get a great deal more money, and be able to marry sooner; and if you leave it, you can never be Lord Mayor, which perhaps that you would like better than having a living and preaching, as you never seemed to fancy preaching much. However, whether you're in the coal trade, or a clergyman, if please God you are but a good man, which that you always have been, and I dare say always will be, it's my thought that it does not matter much; for good is good in the sight of God; and the Scripture, you know, sa[illegible] the tenth chapter, verses 34 and 35, 'Of a truth I perceive that God is no re-

specter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.'"

I thought that I saw in all this, especially when connected with the remarks he had made on what passed between him and Mr. Conway, an evident hankering after the church, and a sort of inward conflict to refrain from urging it upon me. This I could not help feeling somewhat sensibly, and it had the effect of making me look back with more pain than I had ever done before, to the wound I had given him by my abandonment of the church. Perhaps too,—for I do not want to assume to myself more credit for deference to his feelings than is justly my due,—perhaps the different sentiments now prevailing in my own mind, occasioned a quicker sense of the regrets which I had once occasioned to him. I had indeed myself indulged in speculations on returning to the church; for it was undoubtedly true that my situation in it would be essentially altered by having something besides of my own to look to. In any case, Mr. Carberry's legacy would enable me to make a comfortable provision for my father and mother, by the purchase of an annuity for their joint lives, which would place them in easy circumstances, and [illegible] necessity of their working any lo[illegible]r; and,

for myself, a fellowship of a college would be a provision amply sufficient to satisfy my wishes. All thoughts of ever being married were totally abandoned by me; wherever I should now be placed, to be near Katherine was out of the question, and I felt indeed that it was much better for me to be totally separated from her; to see her frequently, without daring to pour out to her all the sentiments of my heart, was a conflict which I scarcely knew how to sustain. In a college life I should be removed from such a scene of temptation, and amid books and retirement I should find the only situation in which I could ever be tolerably at ease. The single stumbling-block to this idea was, that desire to see me married, and surrounded by a family, on which my father so fondly dwelt; and in the way of life I had here chalked out to myself this was a wish that could never be realised. But could it be in any other?—Alas! no!—In whatever situation I should be placed, the mortification of seeing me remain unwedded, was one which my father must endure; and perhaps the thing of all others that could best compensate such a mortification, would be the attainment of his great original object, that of beholding me in the pulpit as a preacher of the Gospel. On the whole, therefore, as far as I had yet had

time to cast my future destiny over in my mind, I thought that I should accept the legacy, and, renouncing all further concern in business, become a solitary college recluse.

In my conversations with my father therefore, as often as he directed a hint towards the church, I never either wholly discouraged or encouraged the idea. "It is very true," I said, "that if I were now to take orders, my situation would be extremely different from what it would have been supposing I had never had this legacy; but I still think, father, that it will be better not to come to any determination till we see how the coal business is likely to be disposed of. It is possible that the purchaser may be one with whom I should not like to have any concerns, and in that case there could be no hesitation in choosing the legacy; we may afterwards consider in what manner it can best be applied. For you know, father, it is not every body with whom one likes to enter into so close a connection as a partnership in business. I do not believe that I should have thought of engaging in such a situation, if I had not known Mr. Canbury very well beforehand, so that I was sure he was a person with whom it was very desirable to form a connection of the kind. But I never could bear a proud and supercilious associate, or one

who would not carry on the business in the same liberal and generous way that he did."

"Very true, Sam; for what signifies, if one is to be Lord Mayor at last, if we can't be pleasant and agreeable with those we have to do with? and it would be quite presuming to suppose that you could find another man who'd be as comfortable a partner as Mr. Carberry. It would be much better to be a clergyman, or a physician, or even a lawyer, than to be in ever such good business, and get ever so much money, and be vexed and plagued with one's partner and his good-morrows. For comfort's comfort; and to my thinking a man may be very comfortable in the church, even though he should never get to be a bishop, or even a dean. There's many a good man, aye, and a gentleman born too, that never gets higher in the church than a living, and yet is very happy,—as witness Mr Armstrong, which there could not be any body more of a gentleman born than he, and yet he's quite contented, God bless him, with only a living, though nobody could have a better right to be a bishop, or even an archbishop, for all the good he does, and for his learning; which, I suppose, there is not a more learned man than he, among all the bishops all over the country. It quite does one good to hear him; he preaches

so well, and seems to know such numbers of things, that one is ready to wonder how he finds room in his head for 'em all. And for that matter, Sam, it's my real belief that he thinks you more learned now, thanks to all his goodness for teaching you, than half the clergymen that goes to be ordained; and if ever you was to think about being ordained, I dare say you would first study a great deal more, and be a great deal more learned than you are now."

In my conversations with Mr. Armstrong, I ventured to hint that circumstances were so much altered since I had five years before professed a great reluctance to going into the church, that I now felt very differently upon the subject, and was not without some idea of returning to it. He said he was not sorry to hear me say so; "When you then consulted me, Samuel," he proceeded, "I gave you my very sincere sentiments upon the occasion, founded, as far as my judgement would permit, on an accurate investigation of the propensities of your mind at that moment. You seemed then to have so determined a repugnance to the idea of taking orders, that I should have thought it extremely wrong in your father to urge the matter further, or endeavour to force you into a way of life which you so much dis-

liked. But circumstances are, as you justly observe, now very much altered. In the first place, you are five years older, you have had more experience of the world, and are really more capable of deciding the matter impartially; you have seen more of other modes of life, of their mingled sweets and bitters; and though you may have been fortunate in not having hitherto tasted much of the bitters, yet you must have seen that every way of life is subject to them. Those you apprehended in the church are certainly in great measure obviated by Mr. Carberry's bounty, and perhaps, for some other reasons, I do not see your prospects in that line of life in the unfavourable light I then did. However, let me be clearly understood to have no intention of influencing you by what I say. If I thought you five years ago competent in a great degree to decide for yourself, I certainly think you much more so at present; and I agree with you entirely, that much must depend upon the prospect presented with regard to your continuance in business, from the person or persons with whom you are to be associated. There is one thing always to be considered, which I uniformly told you I thought should be allowed great weight, though it was not reasonable that your

decision should be wholly regulated by it,—your father's wishes."

"You think, then, sir, that he would still rather see me in the church than continuing in business?"

"I have little doubt of it. Yet, understand me, I only infer this from general conversations with him; he has never positively told me so. If, once or twice, something like an expression of regret at your having abandoned the church has accidentally dropped from him, he has always checked himself, and said God's will be done, and that Sam was the best judge for himself; that he had every reason to be thankful at seeing you in so good a situation, and to be as well satisfied at your having followed your own inclinations, as if you had been guided by his."

It is certain that what was here said by Mr. Armstrong did not make me less incline towards that idea of returning to the church, which had never ceased to be floating in my mind since my first fatal discovery of my passion for Katherine. If I was not therefore wholly determined, at my return to London, in my choice between the legacy and the share of the business, my inclinations certainly preponderated very much in favour of the former.

CHAPTER IV.

A new instance of fraternal affection.—Emotion arrived at its acmé.—A good example set, and implicitly followed.—Humility of situation does not preclude nobility of sentiments.

On my return to town, I found that Katherine, with her brother and sister, were in Chatham Place,» that they had come up for a few days on particular business. I went thither immediately; for, circumstanced as I then was, my total separation from Katherine could not immediately take place: as one of the executors, it was necessary that I should sometimes see her till the affairs were finally settled. She was by herself when I went in, and in such a state of agitation as I had never before seen her; tears were streaming down her cheeks, and when I spoke to her she seemed hardly able to articulate her answer. "Good God, Miss Middleton!" I exclaimed, "something very extraordinary surely must have happened!"—I knew that it could be no common occurrence which had so overpowered Katherine Middleton.

It was some minutes before she could recover herself sufficiently to give me an answer; —"Yes, indeed, Samuel," she said, "it is

something extraordinary. My uncle Shelburne has just been here, to tell me that Maurice means to contest the validity of poor Mr. Carberry's will, on the grounds that he was deranged in his mind at the time it was made, and that I exercised an undue influence over him. I cannot say how much this intelligence has affected me; I knew that he never bore me any good will, but to be thus publicly accused of practices so base, wounds me to the soul."

I never yet experienced a moment when it was so difficult to me to control my feelings towards her. Let those who have ever known what it is truly to love a woman, to adore her, I may almost say, as I adored Katherine, judge what was my situation when seeing her thus distressed, I did not dare clasp her to my heart, and say every thing that the truest affection and veneration could dictate to soothe and console her. It was a dreadful struggle indeed: with my eyes fixed upon her, I stood like a statue, but to utter a syllable was out of my power; and how long this mute scene might have lasted I cannot tell, if it had not been interrupted by Sophia's coming into the room. The sight of her was indeed a great relief to me,—it gave a change to the scene,—while, by an involuntary emotion, I caught her in my arms, nor

could restrain a silent tear that stole from my eye.

I hoped that this emotion would be ascribed to a feeling of interest for her situation, and there certainly was something particularly interesting in it;—in contemplating her sweetness, her innocence, for she was a most engaging child, and then reflecting upon the measures taken by her unnatural brother to deprive her of a large portion, at least, of the fortune which her father's justice had bequeathed her. These sentiments certainly passed through my mind as I pressed her to my heart, and kissed her ardently;—I wished them to be thought those that occupied it principally; —I wished the agony I was in at seeing Katherine in distress, and not daring to utter one word of consolation, to be placed wholly to the account of mingled emotions of indignation and compassion in contemplating the situation of her sister.

It was not long, however, before Katherine, rising superior to this new trouble, began to reassume her general fortitude and composure. "Well," she said, "I know, however, what I ought to do, and it shall be done. If I have for a moment given way to morbid feelings, my sense of duty shall not be overpowered by them. I have been talking with my uncle,

and he tells me that my evidence would be of the utmost importance to support the will, since, living constantly with Mr. Carberry, nobody had equal opportunities of judging whether he ever showed any symptoms of derangement. Yet interested as I am in it, my evidence cannot be received, unless by a solemn act I first renounce all the advantages it offers to me. Such a measure will render me an impartial, consequently a competent witness."

"Good God!" I exclaimed, "and be left destitute!"

"There is a power, Samuel," she said, raising her eyes and hands to Heaven, "and I shall have done my duty."

I fixed my eyes upon her, it was impossible to do otherwise, but it was equally impossible to speak. Sophia looked first at one, then at the other; she seemed to see that there was something extraordinary, yet was wholly unable to comprehend what could be the matter; then going up to Katherine, she took hold of her hand affectionately. Katherine, more deeply moved than before, caught her in her arms and kissed her. "Samuel," she said, "she was bequeathed to my care by the best of mothers; the legacy has been confirmed by a very kind father, with expressions of the strongest reliance on my unabated affection for my charge, which

are indelibly engraven on my mind: shall I then, on this most important occasion, shrink from the performance of an act by which alone I can show myself worthy of the trust reposed in me? —Impossible!" And again kissing the lovely infant, her countenance beamed with an expression of such angelic benevolence, that, wholly subdued, I could bear the scene no longer, but rose up and left the room.

Scarcely knowing what I did, I hastened to my own apartments at the wharf, where I walked up and down for more than an hour before I could in any way collect and arrange my ideas. As soon, however, as my recollection began somewhat to return, and I became capable of reflecting upon all that had passed, the first idea which presented itself to my mind was, that if Katherine's evidence was of so much importance to establish the will, mine might probably be not much less important. It is true that I had not been constantly with Mr. Carberry, as she had; but ever since the death of his wife, that is, for more than two years, I had never failed of seeing him two or three times in the week; I had, in short, lived in that habt of familiar intercourse with him, that, if he had ever shown any symptoms of insanity, it was next to impossible that I should not have per-

ceived them. It seemed, therefore, as if my testimony to the perfectly sane state of his mind, even to the moment when he was attacked with his last illness, must carry very considerable weight with it, and I resolved to lose no time in talking with Mr. Shelburne upon the subject.

I hastened then to Lincoln's Inn Fields, and found him just returned from talking with the principal counsel whom he had engaged to defend the will. I stated to him the business on which I came; I would fain in doing so have expressed in suitable terms my admiration of Katherine's conduct; but I found that it was as much as I could do casually to mention her name, and say that Miss Middleton had told me so and so;—"and," I said, "sir, it has struck me, that, considering how much I was with Mr. Carberry for the last two years of his life, my evidence might perhaps also contribute essentially towards establishing the will."

"It would do so undoubtedly," he replied; "but unfortunately you are interested in the will, and your evidence cannot be received."

"But excuse me, Mr. Shelburne, I have understood that in such a case, by renouncing all interest in it beforehand, the evidence becomes admissible."

"Most certainly."

"And this is what Miss Middleton means to do?"

"Even so. I am authorised to prepare the deed by which she renounces her legacies."

"Then allow me to request, sir, that a similar deed may be prepared for me."

"Mr. Danville!" he exclaimed, fixing his eyes full upon me, "do you consider what you are about?—would you formally and absolutely renounce the provision Mr. Carberry has made for you?"

"Such is indeed my purpose. I hope it will not be opposed or misinterpreted. My sole object is to serve the children of my benefactor, and I trust that there can then scarcely be a doubt of the will being established."

"I should conceive it impossible but that the concurrent testimony of two such witnesses as Katherine and yourself must be decisive as to the sanity of the testator. But consider, Mr. Danville, this is a great sacrifice to make."

"Shall I, Mr. Shelburne, in return for the kindness I have received from this family, permit selfish considerations to deter me from making the only solid acknowledgement for it that may ever be in my power? Could I forgive myself if, from sordid views of my own, I were to hazard the justice which Mr. Carberry

purposed showing his younger children being counteracted, and so large a portion of what was intended for them to be swallowed up in feeding the follies and extravagancies of their unnatural elder brother? Believe me, sir, even though it should in the end appear that the will might have been established without my evidence, I could never have any satisfaction in receiving Mr. Carberry's bounty, accompanied with the reflection, that I had suffered a risk to be incurred of the poor children being defrauded of their rights, in the vague hope of preserving to myself what I never had any claim to expect. Nay, not to take greater credit to myself than the act deserves, what should I gain, supposing the will lost for want of my evidence? I equally lose what was intended for me, and without having the consolation of reflecting that the loss was incurred in supporting the rights of my deceased benefactor's infants."

"And you will really, then, for their sakes, renounce all your former prospects, and have to begin the world anew?"

"I am young, Mr. Shelburne, and have yet ample time before me to seek new means of support."

"Well, then, if such be your determination, the deed you desire shall be prepared, and we shall certainly then have nothing to fear.—This

is a stroke upon which Maurice and his advisers have, probably, never for one moment calculated."

The deeds by which Katherine and I renounced all interest in the will were accordingly prepared and signed by us, and thus the event of the trial was expected without any apprehensions on the part of the defendants.

It was now no longer a question, under which of the modes presented to my choice I should accept Mr. Carberry's bounty. This question, which had undergone so much discussion during my late visit to my father, was hastily determined by the bounty under either form being entirely rejected. In making such a decision, it was impossible for me to consult any one; it was necessary, in order to its answering the purpose for which it was made, that it should be entirely my own act and deed, that I should not be liable to the charge of having been influenced in any way in what I had done. Yet, the act completed, it was necessary that it should be made known to my father, and this I found the most painful moment that the transaction cost me. I was satisfied that I had done right; and I had so much confidence in the real rectitude of his mind, that I had no apprehension of his condemning me; but I felt bitterly the disappointment he would experience on seeing me

wholly deprived of the advantages he had looked forward with so much pleasure to my enjoying.

I accordingly wrote to him, endeavouring to put my reasons for what I had done in the most forcible point of view; and concluded with saying, that as an honest man himself, and never insensible to the claims of gratitude, I felt the fullest assurance that this step would meet with his approbation; though I must deeply regret the consequences with which it was attended, and that much more upon his account than my own. I immediately received the following answer.

'DEAR, DEAR SAM,

'This is with mine and your dear mother's kindest and best love to you; and God forbid that either of us should say such a word as disappointment, for never did we both feel more proud of you than when we read your last letter! I could not help giving my old dame a hearty kiss, and saying, 'Well, Hannah,' says I, 'now I think we may well say that 'tis a great honour to be father and mother to such a lad; and I don't think if Sam had been a king's son that he could have behaved more honourable.'

'Nor no more I do, Sam: what signifies money in comparison of the approbation of

God? and there can't be any doubt that he'll approve your being grateful to them that was always kind to you. Dear Sam, your mother and I can't bear to think that you should talk about being a burden to us, for you know that we never valued any thing we got but for your sake, and to make you happy, and place you as well in the world as we could; and if all have not turned out so well as we hoped, there is a good God who sees every thing we do; and whatever you undertakes next, if we trust in him and perform our duty, he can make it prosper; and you may be as happy and as comfortable at last as if you had never met with any thing but good success. Which for that matter this is no ill success, nor no fault of your own, or want of being industrious, for nobody can have been more industrious, and I trust in God that so you always will be. But as to Mr. Maurice, there never was a greater shame, I think, than for him to want to cheat his own brother and sister, poor little dears, and get away the money that ought to be theirs, only to make a hand of it, just as he has with all the money his dear papa has been so good as to give him! For my part, I can't think how he could have the heart to do such a thing! And nothing can be more noble than for Miss Kitty

to have stood by her brother and sister in such a way to see them righted.

'But now, Sam, I must tell you that Hannah and I we are quite delighted to think that we had got a few pounds saved up, being that we have had particular good luck with the shop this year; and you know, Sam, that ever since you have been at Mr. Carberry's you never would have any thing from us, but always said that what he paid you was quite sufficient for all you wanted, and even somewhat to spend in pleasure, which every body does like to take a little pleasure now and then. So you begged we would spend all we got to make ourselves comfortable, which that indeed we always do, and have as good a piece of meat at our dinner as Mr. Armstrong himself; but then nothing could make us so comfortable as to save money, and have something to leave you when it pleases God to take us. However, as you can't now have any thing more from Mr. Carberry's service, we think you must be in want of a little somewhat to do with, and so we had got fifty pound locked up in a bag, besides a little matter that we have out at use; and we don't want it indeed, Sam, for ourselves, because we have got other money, quite enough to go on and have our bit of meat as usual; and I said to

Hannah, says I, Who knows but Sam may be glad of this now? and I think we had better send it to him, which she said, Indeed, Bob, I think so too. Therefore here it is, Sam, which I hope you will receive it safe; and pray God bless you, and make you always do what is right, as thanks to his mercy he have done now. And this is all at present from

'Your ever-loving father and mother,

'ROBERT and HANNAH DANVILLE.'

I cannot say that I read this letter unmoved; and indeed I thought, that if my father and mother considered themselves as having reason to be proud of their son, I had no less reason to be proud of my parents; the sentiments they had professed would have done honour to any station.

Katherine made only a short stay in town, and then returned to New Lodge with her brother and sister. She had been invited by Mr. Armstrong to come down to Langham, but this for several reasons she declined. In the first place, she wished to continue in perfect retirement till the time when the validity of the will was to be tried, that she might assume the courage requisite to conduct herself with propriety on so solemn and important an occasion. Mr. Shelburne, besides, recommended her having as little intercourse as possible with any persons

who could be considered as interested in the matter; this might open a field for the adverse party to talk of cabals, and raise idle objections to her evidence. For the same reason, and for that alone, he said, he and Mrs. Shelburne had not asked her to come and stay with them.

A like caution was given to me; and, accordingly, from this time till the trial was over I never saw either Katherine or any of the Armstrong family: even my attendance at the wharf as clerk Mr. Shelburne thought better given up, —so that I became on a sudden wholly without employment. My going to Langham was entirely out of the question; I was there too much in the way of one nearly connected with the children in whose behalf I was to appear as a witness. What to do with myself then became a question. Several letters passed between my father and myself upon the subject:—with Mr. Armstrong I could not have any communication,—and the result was, that I re-entered myself as a student of Pembroke-hall at Cambridge, with a view ultimately to taking orders. I immediately went to take up my residence there, intending to make amends, by a very close application to my studies, for all the time I had lost since my first admission at the university.

Before I quitted London, but after my intention of doing so was made public, I received a

visit one morning at my own apartments from Mr. Fenton. He talked to me first for a short time upon some trifling matters of business; so trifling indeed that I did not see much occasion for his having taken the trouble of a walk up-stairs for the purpose. However, I soon found that this was not his sole errand. He hemmed and hesitated, and seemed to have something to say which he hardly knew how to begin upon. At length he expressed himself as exceedingly concerned that they were going to lose me just when they hoped that they should have seen more of me than ever. He assured me that his wife as well as himself had always entertained a great regard for me, and were only sorry that for a long time they had seen so little of me, from Mr. Carberry's wanting me to be so much with him. I had behaved very nobly, he said; but it was hard enough to be thrown upon the wide world just when a prospect was opened of being so comfortably established. But if I would excuse him, he had a proposal to make, and should be very happy if I did but find it agreeable. He did not know, however,—people had their fancies;—it was not always that what one thought good pleased another:—however, no harm done if it was not agreeable;—I should at least, he hoped, not be affronted at his mentioning it.

I could not imagine in what all this was to end, the orator seemed to find so much difficulty in coming to the point. I said that I considered myself as much obliged to him for concerning himself about me and my affairs; that wherever I was I should always retain a grateful sense of the civilities I had received from him and Mrs. Fenton, and should have been happy if circumstances had been more favourable to a continuance of my acquaintance with them.

He replied, that he thought, if I could approve it, there would be no occasion for our acquaintance to be discontinued. Indeed—what he was going to say—he was thinking to say something that might—but he hardly knew how to tell me.

"What can you mean, Mr. Fenton? pray speak out."

"Well, then, Mr. Danville,—though to be sure the mention of such a thing ought not to come first from the lady or her friends,—yet, as you are now in such a disagreeable situation, perhaps—perhaps—perhaps you might not choose to mention it yourself, even though it should be your wish—but you'll excuse me."

"Proceed, I entreat, Mr. Fenton!—your words really make me uneasy."

"Well, then, I must tell you that my Emma has had a great liking to you ever since you came to live here; and if you could but fancy her, as somehow my wife and I always hoped might be, why we should approve the match very much; and as we can do very well for the girl, we might be able to settle you in some good way of getting a livelihood. Indeed, I don't know but what I may buy a share in the business here, if it comes to be sold at last, and then you might live with us still, and help me in conducting it."

"Mr. Fenton, believe me, I feel extremely grateful for your and Mrs. Fenton's kind dispositions towards me; but I am very much concerned to hear what you say with regard to your amiable daughter. I have a high respect for all your family, and acknowledge that I think either of the Miss Fentons would be, under my present circumstances, a match far beyond what I could reasonably expect; but I cannot tell how it is, I am unable to reconcile my mind at all to the thoughts of matrimony. This may seem odd in a young man,—but such are my feelings; and I am sure it would be impossible, while they continue the same, for me ever to make a woman happy: I have therefore too much principle to think of marrying. You will excuse me, then, if I wholly decline

your proffered kindness, though I can assure you that I do not feel the less grateful for it."

"Well, I'm sorry it is so; but I was always afraid that you did not like Emma so well as she likes you. I hope no offence, however, for mentioning it." I assured him that I was not at all offended, and with a sigh he took his leave.

I own that I was a little vexed at what had passed. I did not like the idea of being the object of a partiality which I could never return. I could only rest in the hope that poor Emma's attachment was not so great, but that another sweetheart might drive me entirely from her recollection; and indeed I did not think her composed of elements which would suffer very materially from an unrequited passion. I never ventured to mention this little piece of secret history to my father, lest his old inclination for an union between me and one of these young ladies should be revived; and he should be mortified that when the match was offered me it had been refused.

I do not know that I ever felt any period of my life such a perfect blank as that which now elapsed between my departure from London and the trial. Cut off from all intercourse with the family whose friendship and society was all in all to me, I seemed to myself a perfectly iso-

lated being in the creation. All that I ever heard of them was by means of my father's letters, when he perhaps mentioned having seen Mr. Armstrong or Mr. Walter at church, and that they appeared quite well; or that he had heard that Miss Kitty was well, and was like an angel, she was so good to her little brother and sister, with similar pieces of transient information. How tedious did the time appear till this estrangement was to cease!

CHAPTER V.

Cogitations in the sanctum sanctorum of equity.—The result of them.—A peep into a court of justice.—Rage arrived at its acmé.—Delightful renewal of long restrained intercourse.—A hint of important communications to be expected.

WE have seen Maurice departing from New Lodge in a violent rage, upon hearing of the manner in which his father had disposed of his property. On his return to London he posted to the chambers of Mr. Jones, an attorney in the Temple, between whom and himself a strict intimacy had recently commenced. It originated in Mr. Jones having been employed as the intermediary agent in procuring him the loan upon the strength of which he went down to Weymouth. Various circumstances had contributed to increase this intimacy; and a second negotiation for a loan had confirmed it to such a degree, that the attorney was now become nearly as much the count's oracle as the Earl of Borrowdale had ever been. To this cherished friend then he communicated his griefs, condemning with very severe execrations the precautions his father had taken to prevent his rendering himself a complete beggar; and observing, that since his hands were

thus tied up, it was imposssible for him to fulfil the engagements he had made; he (Jones) must therefore stop the mouths of the rascally Jews as well as he could.

Mr. Jones perfectly agreed in the iniquity of the will, and said that Maurice had good reason to execrate the memory of a father who could use him in such a scandalous manner. What he should do with the Jews he could not tell, as they were not people of very placable dispositions; and were so often in like manner defrauded by the iniquity of parents, that they would not be very easily appeased. As, however, the attorney was seldom at a loss for expedients to promote any purpose he wished to accomplish, either for himself or his employers, he after a little reflection began to ask a variety of questions respecting the deceased:—what were his habits? what sort of society he frequented?—in what way his time was principally spent during the latter part of his life? of what description were the people who were chiefly about him? The answers he received were so satisfactory, that he often clapped or rubbed his hands, exclaiming Good!—very good!—excellent!—capital!—and concluded his examination by asking what reward he might expect if he should get the will set aside?

"Hey!—how!—and what good would that do?" said Maurice.

"Only, that you would then, as heir at law, inherit all the real property, and an equal share with your brother and sister of the personal."

Maurice began to chuckle, to rub his hands, and to whistle. "Bravo, my dear Jones!" he exclaimed, "but how is this to be done?"

"Oh, there are ways, if you will make it answer to me to exert myself. What say you, then?—what recompense have you to propose?"

Maurice was not at first very liberal in his offers: the hope of foiling his father's purposes, and inheriting the property, was extremely grateful to him, but he had no desire to pay the acquisition very dear; he wished to reserve as large a share of it as possible to himself. Mr. Jones, on the other hand, being equally desirous of coming in for as ample a slice as he thought his merits would entitle him to, had no disposition to favour his client in the terms he would accept. He was himself very fertile in resources; but he saw plainly that Maurice was not so, and that he had him therefore pretty much in his power, consequently might nearly dictate his own terms. A considerable alterca-

tion ensued; and at length Mr. Jones moderately consented to compromise the matter at two hundred a-year for his life, averring that there was not another man in the kingdom for whom he would have undertaken the business at so cheap a rate; but he had so much regard for Maurice, and so much compassion for the extreme ill-usage he had received, that he could hardly refuse him any thing.

He then proceeded to explain, that considering the retired manner in which Mr. Carberry had lived from the time of his wife's death, shutting himself up in the country, and shunning all society,—and considering the great ascendancy which Miss Middleton had over him, he must evidently have been *non compos mentis* at the time the will was made. It might besides be clearly proved that undue influence had been used by his daughter-in-law and the young man who was so much in the house, to procure the dispositions that were made, they being under a matrimonial engagement to each other, and that the will consequently could not be valid. What gave a stronger assurance of success to this project was, that Miss Middleton and Mr. Danville were both so deeply concerned in the will, that they could not be called upon as witnesses to prove the sanity of the testator; and since they

were the persons who saw the most of him, all other testimonies must be weak in comparison with theirs. The mode adopted by Katherine and myself, of rendering ourselves competent witnesses, seemed never to have come into Mr. Jones's calculations.

When the man of law heard what had been done, he was exceedingly confounded, and was obliged fairly to confess that this was a stroke which it was impossible for any body to expect. He had no conception, he said, that two people would so easily have relinquished the advantages they might eventually have derived from the will; he thought that recourse would have been had to evidence far less decisive: and indeed he was now almost afraid that it was a lost case. "However, sir," he remarked to Maurice, "you will have this satisfaction, that you are amply revenged upon Miss Middleton and Mr. Danville. The steps we have taken have at least forced them to abandon what they had hoped so unjustly to acquire; and if you cannot recover the fortune yourself, it will be less mortifying to see it reserved for these children, who can never personally have offended you, than that any part should have devolved to people against whom you have such just cause to be highly incensed."

In this suggestion Maurice did indeed find

some source of consolation; yet having been once taught to believe the fortune recoverable, he was now very unwilling to abandon the idea of it; and wisely adverting to the old maxim, that half a loaf was better than no bread, suggested the proposing a compromise, and offering to withdraw his suit, on condition of half the fortune being given up to him. To this idea Mr Jones, however, gave his very decided negative: "It would be," he said, "to acknowledge the weakness of their cause; and as the offer would in all probability be refused, the having made it would go very much against them at the trial;—in fact, he said, it must be refused, since the trustees for the children had no power to make such an agreement. It was much better, since they had proceeded so far, to let the matter go before a jury: there was no saying what might happen; sometimes things occurred, very unexpectedly, of which a counsel could take advantage to invalidate the evidence. A person who was clever at examining witnesses, would often throw them so off their guard, as to make them prevaricate from mere fright; nay, even fairly perjure themselves. There was the greater reason to hope that this might be done in the present case, since the most material witness, Miss Middleton, was a young woman unused to be in

a court of law, who probably never had been in one in her life, and had no idea of the examination she would undergo. She might very likely be frightened into saying any thing that a clever counsel had a mind to;—and as to that, he had provided one who was the devil and all at such work; he was enough to make the most brazen witnesses that ever stood up at the bar forswear themselves, much more a timid young woman."

"Yes, but heng her, she is not so very timid," says Maurice. "She is not frightened at any of those things that young ladies generally are; she is no more afraid of going through a church-yard at twelve o'clock at night, if it be ever so dark, than of walking across her own room."

"O that's nothing at all. Counsellor Browbeater is a much more formidable person than half a dozen ghosts: the very look of him is enough to frighten a woman; he is a perfect scarecrow."

"Well, if he can but frighten her so as to make her forswear herself, that will be prime indeed; that will be banging up to some purpose. Then, who'll chuckle?—who'll chink the guineas?—who'll have his knowing carriages and studs?—who'll peg the Jervies,—tool the mail coaches? Lady Amenda, too, she'll be for beginning again to lenguish and to ogle: but it won't do, I sha'n't even condescend to

look at her. And, Jones, perhaps I may now and then take you a drive in my knowing curricle."

Probably Mr. Jones did not reckon very much upon his rides, but had a strong internal feeling, that if he was to wait for getting into a carriage till his client had obtained possession of the fortune they were pursuing, he might go on foot for the rest of his life. It was not, however, his business to suggest such an idea: indeed, he had himself at any rate now handled his ribbands in such a *prime* manner, that he was sure to *bang* something into his pocket. Whether the cause was gained or not, his own bill must be paid, as well as Counsellor Browbeater's fee; and it was generally understood, that his recommendation of the counsellor to practice was not entirely disinterested; that there was a certain sympathetic feeling between them; so that, whenever the one obtained a fee through the intermediation of the other, the benefit was mutual; and that this was a no less powerful motive with the attorney for recommending the counsellor to practice, than the latter's transcendent talents in the promotion of perjury.

At length the time arrived when those talents, as well as the fortitude of poor Katherine, were to be put to the test. In the room where the witnesses assemble at Maidstone, for it was there

that the cause was to be tried, the will being dated in the county of Kent,—in this room I first saw Katherine, after a separation from her of three quarters of a year. I saw, but could not speak to her. Methought she looked more like an angel than a mortal: there was a calmness, a serenity in her countenance, the result of perfect self-command, of a feeling of self-approbation in what she was doing, which gave the most sublime effect imaginable to features at all times peculiarly interesting. I rejoiced that I was not to be present at her examination; my anxiety upon her account would have made me almost incapable of answering the questions that were afterwards to be put to me; it would have been more fatal to me than all the talents of Counsellor Browbeater. From those who were present I have repeatedly heard that there never was a more impressive scene witnessed. The court was crowded: the story had interested the public particularly. The predicament in which Katherine stood was well known,—the champion of a brother and sister, for whose sakes she had sacrificed every consideration with regard to herself,—and the deep interest excited was evinced by the mute attention with which every word that came from her lips was received. She went through the whole examination with a calmness and serenity, she

answered questions the most perplexing with a readiness and firmness of tone which induced the utmost astonishment and admiration among the whole audience, and spoke in the most forcible manner her own deep conviction of the perfect truth of every word she uttered. Her whole manner had in it something so impressive, that Counsellor Browbeater himself could not help being affected by it to such a degree, as to render his efforts to confound her feeble in comparison with what he usually exerted; and even they did not pass without something like a murmur of indignation through the court. It was only when all was over that she was somewhat subdued, and returning into the witnesses' chamber burst into tears; but having thus for a few minutes given way to her feelings, her fortitude was resumed, and the same sublime serenity as before gradually spread itself over her countenance.

The trial did not last very long: the adverse party could make out so very poor a case, that there was no room for an extended refutation on our side; nay, the judge, in summing up the evidence, rather threw some oblique reflections upon the plaintiff's counsel for suffering so wretched a matter to be brought before the court, and the jury without retiring gave a verdict for the defendants. Thus was the will

established, and every hope on Maurice's part of beggaring himself entirely cut off. His rage with his attorney and counsel was unbounded; and had he been less of a coward, it was sufficient to have afforded them cause to tremble for the consequences. But in his pusillanimity they had a sufficient security against its being vented in any thing more wounding than execrations; and to these they were so well accustomed, that they passed wholly unregarded. Menaces of an action at law were indeed mingled with the execrations; but Maurice having just had a sufficient taste of what the law was, they were soon dropped. His only consolation was, that he saw Katherine reduced to a state of dependence, instead of being mistress of an ample fortune.

For her, the consciousness of having been a principal instrument in preserving to her brother and sister the portions destined them by their father, was a sufficient recompense.— "I know, uncle Shelburne," said she, "that I must do something to support myself; I only wish to consult with you and my other friends what is best to be done." As guardian to her sister, however, an allowance was necessarily to be made for her education; and it was in the power of the trustees to arrange it in such a liberal way, that it might in some small de-

gree compensate what she had sacrificed. Mr. Shelburne, besides, entreated that she would not hastily determine on seeking any new means of subsistence, as he thought it a duty incumbent upon all her connections to contribute as far as lay in their power to making her circumstances easy and comfortable.

As soon, indeed, as the trial was over, she received a most kind and pressing invitation from her uncle at Langham to make his house her home, as her mother had once done under circumstances somewhat similar. He desired that her little charge might be her companion; and begged that Edward might equally be his regular guest at the holidays, conformably to the wish expressed by Mr. Carberry, that till he was of age he should always find a home where his sisters were established. Katherine at first expressed some reluctance to troubling her uncle with such an addition to his family; but on his repeated assurances that it would be a source of infinite comfort and gratification to him, the offer was at length accepted, with many expressions of delight, and with the warmest acknowledgements. Her living at New Lodge was out of the question; since, although Mr. Carberry had left her the option of doing so, this right was renounced in the general renunciation she had made of all her interests in the will,

and she had not the means of affording to live there as a tenant. It was therefore now determined that the place should be let: Katherine only agreed, at the request of the trustees, to remain there by way of taking care of the house till it was so: then, and not till then, she was to go down to Langham. A negotiation had been commenced a short time before for the sale of the coal-business, in case of the will being established: this was now brought to a conclusion, and all the affairs settled, when there remained five-and-twenty thousand pounds to divide between Edward and Sophia.

For myself, not many days after the trial I received the following letter from Mr. Armstrong. Reader, accuse me not of vanity, I entreat, in giving it at full length; rather say that I have a just sense of the satisfaction which ought to be felt at receiving commendation from such a man. Such, I trust, is my real feeling;—I trust, too, that it is an honest one.

'My dear Samuel,

'If I have suffered myself to remain silent so many months, and have never even by a single line expressed to you the feelings with which your late conduct has inspired me, I can truly say that I have exercised no common degree of self-command. I know not indeed how I could have prevailed upon myself to persist in

that silence, but in the strong conviction that you would impute it to the true cause; that you would yourself see the propriety of abstaining from every thing which might be construed into an appearance of any influence having been used on our part which could occasion the step you had taken; or that you were acting under the assurance of ample compensation from us, for the sacrifices you had made. You have been well aware, I am sure, how necessary it was that your act should appear what it truly was, entirely your own, uninfluenced by any thing which had passed between you and the friends of those children towards whom you were behaving so nobly; nor do I doubt of your having done us the justice to believe that nothing less than a motive so powerful could have withheld us from paying the tribute which we deeply felt to be your due.

'Yes indeed, Samuel, you know not how sensibly I have been affected by what has passed! I have had too much concern in your education, I have seen too much of your progress in life, of the gradual expansion of those faculties with which we are endowed by Heaven, not to feel for you almost—why should I say *almost?*—indeed I have felt for you the real affection of a father, and have been as deeply anxious as your father himself to see you such a charac-

ter that any parent might be proud of owning you for his son. If such then have been my unvaried feelings towards you, and I am sure you will give me credit for the sincerity of my professions, judge with what heartfelt satisfaction I must have witnessed the true greatness of mind shown by you upon this interesting occasion. I could not indeed help feeling a little proud that this was the boy towards whom I had always borne so sincere an affection, whose mind I had assisted to form; I seemed almost raised in my own estimation, from the flattering assurance that I had contributed in any degree towards the establishment of principles so honourable. Samuel, accept this tribute; it comes from a heart which cannot flatter, yet can as little withhold praise where it truly thinks praise due: but having said thus much, I will not hazard the appearing a flatterer, by dwelling upon a subject in which your own self-approbation must be a much greater reward than any acknowledgements offered by others.

'Indeed, if ever such a happy revolution should be accomplished in the mind of Maurice himself, as that he should be brought to take a right view of things, he must then acknowledge that his obligations to you and our dear Katherine are not less than those of his brother and sister. You have, in fact, no less sacrificed yourselves

to preserve him from beggary than to support the interests of Edward and Sophia. Had he obtained possession of the property, it is probable that the whole would have been dissipated in two or three years, whereas now he must always have sufficient to live upon comfortably.

'It has not been the least part of my concern on this occasion, that I have thought it improper even to talk with your father upon the subject; that I could not suffer myself to express, even to him, my sense of our obligations to you, and admiration of the manner in which you had acted. I was so confident of the real integrity of his heart, that I had no doubt of his having right feelings upon the occasion, and could not be insensible to the satisfaction he would experience in hearing those commendations bestowed upon your conduct to which it had a just claim. Even this, however, I thought better avoided; I never permitted myself to inquire after you, lest one thing might lead to another; I only casually learnt that you had returned to your collegiate studies. There was a time when I should have heard this circumstance with great surprise, when I should even have had some difficulty in believing it; but from the conversation that passed between us when you were last at Langham, it now appeared perfectly credible. Shall I add, that I heard it

with very great pleasure? Yes, indeed, I do very much rejoice, Samuel, that you have come to this determination; I rejoiced in it when first informed of it, I rejoice in it still more at this moment.

'For, my good young friend, when the caution we have so long observed ceased to be necessary, and I felt myself at liberty to speak, I lost not a moment in performing what I considered as a duty incumbent upon me, at the same time that my inclinations were highly gratified by it; and upon receiving Mr. Shelburne's letter to announce the event of the trial, I carried the tidings myself to your father and mother. I have seldom experienced a more affecting scene; the good people absolutely shed tears of delight as I expressed my sentiments upon the occasion, and the mortification I had felt in being obliged so long to restrain myself from communicating them. The exultation of their hearts was indeed too mighty for utterance; and while their tears were shed profusely, they said not a word. It was only when I began to inquire where you were, and what you had been doing in this long interval, that your father recovered the power of speech, and told me that you had re-entered yourself at college. He had therefore, he said, again hopes of hearing you preach before he should be taken away;

and if he could but be so happy, he should then be quite resigned whenever it might please God to call for him. Indeed, Samuel, such pleasure sparkled in his eyes at this prospect, that I was for a moment half disposed to call in question the rectitude of the advice I had formerly given you upon the subject.

'I trust it is scarcely necessary to add that we are all very impatient to see you. It might possibly not be right to think of your coming to Langham at the Easter vacation, as your studies, during the present term, have been very much interrupted by your attendance at Maidstone: yet, if this could be managed, it would give us infinite pleasure. There is a subject upon which I wish earnestly to talk with you, and upon which it would be culpable in us to remain longer silent. You have shown yourself nobly disinterested; but it is become the duty of every one connected with the children whose cause you generously supported, to lessen, as much as lies in their power, the inconveniences you have thereby created to yourself. I hinted the subject to your father, when he assured me that he had saved wherewithal to maintain you till you might have arrived at college emoluments sufficient to maintain yourself; and as to himself and his wife, he said, they had so much reason to be proud

of you, that they should never grudge working on for your sake to the end of their lives. This, however, must not be permitted. You have abandoned your own interests entirely to promote those of a part of our family; it is not in the power of the children, for whose more immediate advantage this sacrifice was made, at present to requite such a service in the manner that it ought to be requited; but it would be wholly unpardonable in their connections to let it pass without any acknowledgement at all. We must, therefore, claim it as a right to arrange the matter in our own way, not considering ourselves as performing an act of generosity, but as discharging a debt of gratitude.

'Walter desires me to add that he is extremely impatient to see you. I am sorry to say, with respect to him, that we are but where we were as to the main point, and what we shall do at last I know not. I cannot, however, forbear hoping that some good may be ultimately derived from his increasing fondness for study, and for rural occupations. My idea is, that if the little fortune I have saved could be laid out in an eligible purchase of land, he might devote himself to its cultivation, so as to derive from it a comfortable and pleasant source of subsistence.

'Adieu, for the present, my dear Samuel,—God bless you, and continue to you always your present excellent dispositions!—so fervently prays

'Your faithfully affectionate

'BERNARD ARMSTRONG.'

From my father I also received a letter describing in strong terms the great delight he had received from Mr. Armstrong's visit, and from all his kind expressions towards me. He had sometimes, he said, been quite uneasy that for such a long time Mr. Armstrong seemed so shy of him, and never talked to him about me, not so much as even to ask where I was, and how I did; he was almost afraid that either he or I had done something to offend him, though he could not imagine how that could be. He did not know how to think that he could be affronted at my giving up Mr. Carberry's goodness, seeing that it was not out of pride, but only to serve his children, and he had often talked to his old Hannah about it, but they could neither of them make it out. Now, however, he was quite pleased; for Mr. Armstrong was as free as ever with him, and said such kind things of me that he did not know how to be thankful enough for them. He added, that he and Hannah wished very much to see me, and so did Mr. Armstrong

and Mr. Walter; they all hoped therefore that I would contrive somehow or other to come there for a little while before it was long.

It was too consonant with my own wishes to find myself again among all these friends, for me not to be very desirous of complying with theirs; and I accordingly resolved to spend my short Easter vacation at Langham. On my arrival there, I heard of some new and very important occurrences, which had recently taken place in the Armstrong family, by which my interest was excited in no slight degree. They were indeed of too much importance to be related at the end of a chapter, and shall therefore be made the beginning of a fresh one.

CHAPTER VI.

Extraordinary inquiries made in hiring a house.—A hasty flight to a distant part of the country.—A striking contrast.—An unexpected arrival after a very long absence.—A resolution taken to recompense merit.

As soon as it was determined that New Lodge should be let, an advertisement announcing it was put into the public papers, and other means were taken of making the intention known. Not many days after, two gentlemen arrived, bringing with them a letter from Mr. Shelburne to Katherine, which mentioned that the bearers wished to see the place, and requesting her to go herself with them over the house and grounds. Mr. Shelburne apologized for giving her this trouble; but he said they were friends of Mrs. Northington's, and had been particularly recommended to him by that lady. The elder of the two, who was the person that thought of hiring the place, was extremely nice and exact in every thing relating to his house, and was desirous, therefore, of obtaining all possible information with regard to the premises: he wished, in short, to ask many more questions than it was possible for a servant to answer; and for this reason he

had applied to Mrs. Northington for a recommendation, that he might make his inquiries of one who had inhabited the house. "You will then oblige me much, my dear Katherine," Mr. Shelburne concluded, "if you will show the gentlemen about yourself, and give them all the information they desire."

This gentleman appeared towards sixty years of age; he was tall, well-looking, and had something frank and engaging in his manner, which, at first sight, pleased Katherine very much. He was, as from the letter she had reason to expect, extremely minute in his inquiries; but she answered them for some time with great complacency, and smiled, without having any idea of being offended, at several jokes and remarks which he made upon different things as he examined them: on the whole, however, he expressed himself as exceedingly pleased, and was lavish in his compliments upon the nice order in which every thing was kept. At length, however, he began to assume a kind of familiarity in his manner which she did not altogether like, making two or three observations, which, from an entire stranger, she thought bordered upon impertinence, and she felt a disposition to give him very short answers.

As they were going round the grounds, the

two children were playing about, when the gentleman said, "I cannot ask whether that sprightly boy and that lovely little lass are children to the fair inhabitant of this place; the ages of the respective parties will not permit such a supposition, but they are perhaps a nephew and niece?"

"I beg your pardon, sir, they are a half-brother and sister."

"To whom you are a mother, as it should seem?"

"Poor things! they have neither father nor mother living; and I endeavour to supply their place to them as well as I can; but a sister is a very indifferent substitute for parents."

"I dare say that however this may be true as a general proposition, in the present instance few people would be found to assent to its justice."

Katherine blushed at a compliment so very little expected from an entire stranger, and which, as coming from a stranger, she thought so very frothy and unmeaning, since it was impossible that he could be a judge of her conduct, having no data whatever to go upon: she felt, therefore, rather mortified than pleased at what she considered as the mere effect of a propensity to speech-making.

He then proceeded to a long series of ques-

tions, as to how far she had been concerned in the management of the house, and how much of the excellent order observable every where was to be assigned to her superintendance? observing that, according to appearances, the house and premises had not been more material sufferers by the loss of their master and mistress, than the children by the loss of their parents. In short, the old gentleman proceeded so from one fine speech to another, that at length she did not know which way to look, or what to answer; and had it not been out of respect to her uncle, by whom the visitors were recommended, she would probably have taken her leave, and left them to walk about by themselves.

He at length called the children to him, kissed them, and, enlarging much upon their obligations to their sister, charged them to behave well to her, since she was so kind to them. Katherine was positively piqued. What business is it of his, she thought, whether they behave well or ill to me?—One would imagine that this was some good old prosing grandpapa, who conceived it necessary to give his dull common-place good advice to his grandchildren, instead of a man who never saw them or me till this moment, and is never likely to see us again;—for I am sure that I never

will show him about any more, not even to oblige uncle Shelburne.

Not a nook or a corner of the premises was left unexamined by him, there was no end of the questions he asked; and though making repeated apologies for detaining her so long, still he detained her, till she grew extremely impatient for the visit to be over, while he seemed proportionably little disposed to conclude it. It was not till after prying about for three full hours that he took his leave. On doing so, he said that he would see Mr. Shelburne, and talk with him about the house, when he had no doubt that they should soon agree upon terms; nay, he said, he did not know that he should stop short at negotiating for the house and furniture, he believed he must endeavour to hire the inhabitants into the bargain.

Katherine did not know what she was to understand by this last observation; it seemed downright impertinence, if not something worse, nor could she forbear ruminating deeply the rest of the day upon all that had passed. "What could he mean," she said within herself, "by talking of endeavouring to hire the inhabitants?—Can it be that he has heard of my present situation, that he knows me to be without fortune, and would insult me with the

idea that—? No, surely, that is impossible!—I hope there was nothing in my behaviour which could authorise his entertaining such an idea for a moment. Besides, if my uncle had not known something of his character, and been persuaded that he was a man who might safely be trusted with his niece, he certainly never would have thought of recommending him in such a way. Indeed, though he was almost rudely inquisitive, he seemed frank and open-hearted, not artful and insidious. Yet there was something so unaccountable in his whole deportment, that one knows not what is to be inferred from it: if his last words had not the meaning which they certainly might be construed to have, one scarcely knows what they could mean: perhaps, after all, they were said without any meaning,—only they gave me some alarm from a consciousness of the delicacy of my situation."

These things she revolved over and over in her mind, one while persuaded that she was alarming herself unnecessarily; the next convinced, from the whole manner of her visitor, that he was aware of her situation, and thought himself therefore authorised to take liberties with her, which he would not have done had she been differently circumstanced. Perhaps he was somebody who had been in court at

the trial, and had mistaken her firmness in the cause of truth and justice, for boldness and forwardness, and therefore conceived that there was no occasion for any particular delicacy in his behaviour to her. In short, the more she thought about it the more she was perplexed, and the result was that her situation there became very painful to her; she was afraid that as long as she continued without being under the roof of a regular protector, she should be liable to similar insults, and she sighed for the moment that would place her out of the reach of them under the hospitable roof of her excellent uncle Bernard.

She was still occupied with these ideas when Mr. Shelburne arrived two days after. He saw that there was something more than usual upon her mind; and on his inquiring what it might be, she told him the whole story, together with the painful impressions which she had received from it.

Mr. Shelburne acknowledged that the gentleman's behaviour was very extraordinary:— "For my part, my dear niece," said he, "I know nothing of him; I was only requested by Mrs. Northington to furnish him with a letter which should gain him access to you; and I felt so convinced that she would not recommend any body in such a way, unless assured

that he was a man of honour and a gentleman, that I did not hesitate a moment in giving the letter desired."

"Did he call upon you, uncle, at his return to town?"

"No, indeed;—I have neither seen nor heard any thing of him since he was here."

"Very odd.—He seemed when he went from hence determined on losing no time, but that the matter should be settled immediately."

A great deal more conversation passed upon the subject; and at length Mr. Shelburne seemed to assent so much to the expediency of Katherine's leaving the house without delay, that he said his own wife and Fanny should come down for a time, that she might be released. Her journey to Langham was accordingly fixed to take place in three days.

If the reader should wish to know whether Katherine's apprehensions were well or ill grounded, he will soon be satisfied; but we must first desire him to favour us with his company, while we take a peep into some transactions that had been going forward in a distant part of the country.

Our leading counsel, Mr. Fairfax, who had been brought from London by a special retainer, not being one of the regular counsel who attended the circuit, when he quitted

Maidstone after the trial, proceeded to Exeter on another special retainer. In this cause, as well as in ours, a woman was one of the principal witnesses, and Mr. Fairfax equally obtained a verdict in favour of his client.

From thence he went upon some business into Cornwall, and, after ten days spent there, returned again through Exeter, where he was invited to meet a large party at dinner, at the house of a Mr. Sprainger, an old acquaintance of his. This gentleman had been one of the special jury upon the cause in which Mr. Fairfax was engaged, so that, in the course of conversation, an affair in which both had been so materially concerned very naturally came under discussion. "Well," said Mr. Fairfax, "I have recently, in two causes which I had the honour of pleading, had an opportunity of observing a very extraordinary contrast. You saw, Mr. Sprainger, with what extreme difficulty we could make any thing out of the evidence of that Mrs. Hassenby; yet she was not a very young woman, she seemed forty at least, an age when the timidity of youth ought in reason to be past, and a woman may be expected to have a competent degree of self-possession. She had not besides any beauty which could create a bashfulness, from being conscious that all eyes were upon her, and therefore occasion

confusion. In short, from her age, from her being in a station of life in which she had mingled a great deal with the world, and was used to being very much in public,—from her having the reputation of being a sensible woman, a great talker, and a sort of oracle among her acquaintance at Exeter,—from all these circumstances I expected that her answers would have been ready, clear, and consistent, and that we should have had no difficulty in coming at the truth. Instead of this, I never saw any body more confused, who seemed to possess less self-command, or who was more easily thrown off her guard, so that she was many times upon the verge of perjuring herself. She seemed, in short, scarcely to know what she said; and if our cause had not been a very good one, her evidence was enough almost to have lost it."

"It is true," said Mr. Sprainger. "The judge pretty plainly insinuated to us that very little stress was to be laid upon her evidence; and indeed I believe we all thought so before we knew his opinion."

"Before I came hither," proceeded Mr. Fairfax, "I had been at Maidstone, upon a cause relative to a will, the validity of which was contested on the plea of the testator having been insane at the time when it was made. The principal witness in this cause was equally

of the female sex, yet she seemed of a very different order of beings from Mrs. Hassenby. She was a very nice pretty young woman, not three-and-twenty, daughter-in-law to the testator, and had given up an ample fortune left her in the will, in order to be a competent witness on the part of a half-brother and sister, children, whose interests were materially involved in the establishment of the will. She had been for more than two years mistress of her father-in-law's house; and he having lived almost in entire seclusion in the country, no one besides could have had equal opportunities of seeing whether he had ever shown any symptoms of derangement. I can assure you I do not know that, in the whole course of my practice, I ever heard so clear and consistent an evidence given as by this young woman. She answered in a firm and audible tone, yet with perfect modesty; it seemed entirely the result of self-command, not of any thing like forwardness or disgusting confidence. She never wandered from the point, or said a word more or less than would answer the question clearly: I have scarcely ever been more interested by any body, or ever seen any body with whom I wished more earnestly to cultivate an acquaintance; there must be something extraordinary in the mind of that girl; a happy union of

manly sense with the most perfect feminine delicacy."

"I suppose," said one of the gentlemen in company, "you are speaking of the Carberry cause?—I understood that it was to be tried these assizes."

"The same," said Mr. Fairfax.

"The Carberry cause!" exclaimed an elderly gentleman, who had been listening with particular attention.—"Was the young woman's name indeed Carberry?—By Heaven she is a noble-minded girl!"

"I beg your pardon, sir," Mr. Fairfax replied, "the young lady's name was Middleton;—Carberry was the name of the half-brother and sister, whose claims she supported."

"A noble-minded girl, indeed!—And you say, sir, she is about three-and-twenty?"

"So I was informed."

"And gave up a large fortune to become an evidence in behalf of her brother and sister?"

"As much as twelve or fifteen thousand pounds."

"Noble indeed!—we shall not often find her equal."

"So I think.—Nay, more: I have even heard that she is in consequence pennyless, and must seek some means of gaining her livelihood."

" Seek her bread!—Shame on the world if they could let her do so!—But I beg pardon of the company, I am interrupting them," and he sunk into a fit of deep musing.—This lasted about a quarter of an hour, when he proposed to another gentleman his companion to take their leave, reminding him, that as they were to set off for London very early in the morning, it would be expedient to go to bed early.

The company had all been exceedingly struck with his manner, and the enthusiasm with which he spoke, nor could forbear as soon as he was gone inquiring who he was. "He seems," said Mr. Fairfax, " to have fallen desperately in love with my young damsel, merely from report; and indeed she is a damsel to fall in love with. I do not know what might have been my own fate, if I had not been unfortunately already encumbered with a wife and family. She is a charming young woman, that is certain. But who is the gentleman, Sprainger?"

" I know nothing more of him than that he is an adventurer just returned from India, and is reported to have his pockets well lined with rupees, which, it appears, will be very convenient to the lady, since she has renounced her fortune. He is travelling up to town from Falmouth with the other gentleman, who is an

East India captain, and an old friend of mine. The latter calling upon me this morning in his way through the town, I pressed him to stay and join our party at dinner. This he at first declined, having, as he said, a fellow traveller with him, whom he could not in good manners leave. I of course said that I should be very happy in the fellow traveller's company, and thus it was that he happened to be here. I wish it may prove a lucky circumstance for the lady."

"And so do I, with all my heart," said Mr. Fairfax. "It would really give me very sincere pleasure to hear of any good fortune that had befallen her."

The East-Indian adventurer and the captain pursued their way to the inn:—"You are thoughtful, my good friend," said the latter: "this damsel, of whom the lawyer spoke so honourably, seems from mere report to have lighted up a flame in your heart."

"She has lighted up a flame in my heart, indeed," replied the other. "She is a noble-minded girl; and if all be as I suspect, my whole fortune shall be laid at her feet."

"Without considering that she is only three-and-twenty, while you, my good friend, must, as I conjecture, be nearer sixty than fifty."

"And what of that? I know of no reason

why I should not therefore place my whole fortune at her disposal."

"To be sure you are at full liberty to make the experiment; and I will confess that instances have been known of young ladies accepting old fellows like ourselves for husbands, provided they were rich;—but should you have no fear of consequences?"

"It is not as a husband that I mean to offer myself."

"Heyday! what's in the wind now?—and do you expect——"

"No, I do not expect,—but this is in the wind. It is now near forty years since I first went over to India, and I have never been in England since. At that time I left a sister in my native country, not more than twelve years of age. She has, as my letters from England have informed me, been married successively to two husbands, one bearing the name of Middleton, the other that of Carberry. Now the name of the damsel in question you heard was Middleton, that of her half-brother and sister, Carberry; I leave you to draw the inference."

"Oho! you think then that you have discovered a niece?"

"I have no doubt of it, and you will surely agree with me that nothing can be done for

such a girl beyond what she deserves. Let us, therefore, hasten to London; there I will inquire her out, will claim her as my own, she shall be my adopted daughter, the pride, the joy, the comfort of my old age. I trust you will not think such a plan unsuited to my years."

"It is to show yourself the worthy uncle of such a niece."

Yes, reader, this East-Indian adventurer was no other than Ethelred Armstrong, Esq. the second brother of the Armstrong family, who, at the very commencement of this History, was chronicled as having early in life gone out to India. It has been stated, that the commencement of his career there was not prosperous; but that his affairs afterwards assumed a brighter aspect, and that for some years more favourable accounts of him had been received. It was not, however, known among the family that he was likely to return before many more years were expired with a very large fortune. He had purposely rather held back this intelligence, somewhat on the plan pursued by Sir Oliver Surface, because, at his return to England, he wished to prove the dispositions of his relations there by not going among them at first in the character of a rich man; he wished them rather to conceive him returned in very

moderate circumstances, with sufficient to live upon, but not much in the way of superfluity. What he learnt by chance at Exeter made a considerable change in his ideas: the probation Katherine Middleton had already undergone was so extremely satisfactory to him, that he scarcely now entertained the idea of proving any other of his relations; he thought that his fortune never could be better disposed of, if all that he had heard was true, than in adopting her as his daughter, and making her his heir.

Still, however, the other plan was not wholly abandoned. The captain had long been his intimate friend, and he now made him the confident both of his former and of his present projects. "I would fain see this girl," he said, "without her having an idea who I am;—I would fain too inquire further particulars relative to her. Though I do not disbelieve the story, since it comes from authority not to be doubted, yet I would have more decided assurance that I am not misled;—I would know whether this act was as purely disinterested as we have heard it represented. Will you lend me your assistance, if it should be wanted, in procuring the information I desire?"—The captain promised that he would do any thing in his power to serve him, and they

agreed to lay their heads together at their arrival in London, and consult how best to proceed.

But a circumstance which occurred before they got to London, put things in a train better than could have been done by any devices of their own. Stopping at Hounslow to change chaises, Mr. Armstrong took up a newspaper which lay upon the table in the inn, where one of the first things that met his eye was the advertisement of a capital mansion and grounds to be let, near Tunbridge Wells, in Kent, called New Lodge, lately the residence of Edward Carberry, Esq., deceased. For particulars, inquire at the office of Randolph Shelburne, Lincoln's Inn Fields. "Good Heavens!" he exclaimed, "this must be my late brother-in-law's house!"—He paused a few minutes, then said, "Captain, I must fix my residence somewhere, why not here?"

"An excellent thought!" said the Captain.

Mr. Armstrong looked again at the advertisement. "Shelburne," he said, "surely that is the name of another brother-in-law, and by going to his office I may get at all the information I wish. This therefore shall be one of my first objects after I get to town."

Within an hour then after their arrival in the great city, they knocked at the door of

Mr. Shelburne's office. The attorney was not there himself, but the proposed inquiries were made of the head clerk. In the course of them, our nabob not only asked all the questions necessary from one who had an idea of hiring the house, but he sifted the clerk pretty closely about the family of the late Mr. Carberry, and collected from his answers the fullest confirmation of Mr. Fairfax's story. He also learned that Mr. Carberry had entertained so high an opinion of Katherine, that notwithstanding her youth he had left her sister entirely to her care; and finally, that as soon as New Lodge could be let, she was to go and keep the house of an uncle, a clergyman, who was a widower, and had a living in Wiltshire.

All this was very satisfactory; but the good uncle still wanted to see his niece, unknown to her, and the question was, how this was to be accomplished. Another accidental circumstance assisted him in this matter also. After the inquiries in Lincoln's Inn Fields were concluded, as they came out, "Now," said Mr. Armstrong, "it remains to see my good girl without being known as her uncle."

"We may lay our heads together in the evening to contrive that," said the Captain: "at present I must go and pay my devoirs to a

fair lady, whom I very much admire, and who has become a widow since I was last in England. I have a double interest now in wishing to see her, from her being a widow. Who knows what may come of it?—And if I should think of presenting my humble homage to her, you cannot retort upon me what I remarked to you about old fellows becoming suitors to young girls, since my lovely dame must be I should think at least fifty."

"Well, success attend you! and at dinner, when we meet at our hotel, we can settle our plans."

Away then went the Captain, and knocked at a door in Grosvenor-street,—it was that of Mrs. Northington. She was exceedingly happy to see him, and, as an old friend to whom her former situation was well known, related to him in the course of conversation all that had happened to her since their last meeting. This having led to Mr. Shelburne's name being more than once mentioned, on account of the concern which he had had in settling Mr. Northington's affairs, the Captain caught at it directly, and said, "Do you mean Mr. Shelburne, of Lincoln's Inn Fields?"

"The same," she replied.

"You know him then?"

"Of course."

"And could recommend me and a friend to him for a particular purpose?"

"Most willingly."

"The thing then is this. A gentleman with whom I have been very intimately acquainted in India, came over as a passenger in my ship. He has been making inquiries about a house in Kent, of which Mr. Shelburne has the letting as trustee for the owner, who is a minor. For very particular reasons my friend wants to get a recommendation to Mr. Shelburne, so that, when he goes to look over the house and premises, he may be shown about by the young lady who at present lives there. A word from you would perhaps procure us admission to the lady, who we understand is niece to Mr. Shelburne, and I will answer for my friend that you may very safely recommend him."

"With the greatest pleasure," said Mrs. Northington; and she immediately wrote the note desired, charged with which, the Captain met his friend at dinner. This it was which occasioned Katherine so long a visit from her uncle, without her having the least idea that it was a near relation she was showing about.

CHAPTER VII.

Illustrations of the art of angling.—A deep offence given, and a handsome apology made for it.—A conversation which paves the way to important consequences.—Laudable zeal shown in vindicating a benefactor.

It is some time since the reader has heard any thing of Mrs. Northington, excepting the transient mention of her in the last chapter. This has not been from want of respect on my part for that lady; the respect with which she inspired me, even from the first time of my seeing her, never experienced any abatement, it continued fervent and sincere; but other matters have pressed so much upon me, that I have had no opportunity of adverting to her. It has appeared that she remained at Brompton, with her husband, as long as he lived, and that he did not die till the November following his accident: during this period I now and then called, with her permission, to inquire after him and her, but I had not leisure to do so often. Mr. Anderson was for the greatest part of the time resident with her, he only occasionally went down for a few days to his own

house at Glenmore; nor did he quit her till a month after Mr. Northington's death, when she returned to her house in Grosvenor-street.

It has appeared that before Mr. Northington's removal to Brompton, Mr. Anderson and I had twice met without speaking to each other; once on occasion of his bringing the Miss Fentons home to Thames-street, and again when he came into the room at Bedford Row, as I was going out of it. On neither of these occasions did I know even so much of him as his name, or was aware that he was uncle to Mrs. Northington; much less had I any idea that he had once been the kind and zealous friend of my excellent benefactor Mr. Armstrong. The first time that I called at Brompton, Mr. Anderson was sitting with Mrs. Northington, so that we were formally introduced to each other, as Mr. Anderson and Mr. Danville, and I several times heard Mrs. Northington call him uncle:—still, however, there was nothing to me striking in the name. Mr. Armstrong, in relating to me the particulars of his early attachment, had only said that he was visiting a friend at Ludlow, when he became acquainted with the lady; he never mentioned his friend's name, or said that he was uncle to his *bien aimée:* consequently neither the seeing him there, nor hearing him called by the name

of Anderson, gave me any particular ideas with regard to him. My name was not, however, equally indifferent to him; and as he had certain ideas respecting me, of which the reader is already apprized, he was not sorry to be presented with an opportunity of gratifying the curiosity he had on my account, by entering into conversation with me upon a variety of topics.

At our first meeting, however, we talked only upon general subjects; he rather seemed to aim at making some estimate of my talents, than of coming to any particular point: but the second time we met, Mrs. Northington being above with her husband, so that we were left tête-à-tête, he said, "If I am not mistaken, Mr. Danville, you are the gentleman whom I met at Mr. Carberry's coal wharf in Thames Street, on the morning when I carried home to the superintendant there two fugitive lasses, the charge of whom from Newcastle to London I had undertaken?"

"I recollect the circumstance perfectly, sir."

"The young ladies are well, I hope, and satisfied now to remain quietly at home? They have had enough of one flight, and are in no danger of wandering forth again in quest of adventures, and of wanting some new knight errant to take them under his protection?"

"The ladies, I am sure, sir, were under great obligations to you; and would, no doubt, be very much flattered by your remembrance of them. I do not know of any affair going forward at present; but I think that either of them would be extremely happy in meeting with some more faithful knight than him under whose escort they made their voyage to the north; they seem to me both very desirous of being engaged with a protector for life."

One thing led to another, till at length Mr. Anderson said,—"I understood, in the course of conversation with my fellow travellers, that Mrs. Carberry was originally a Miss Armstrong, though a widow when Mr. Carberry married her?"

"It is very true, sir."

"Did she belong to a family of that name in the North?"

"You mean, I presume, sir, the Armstrongs of Winstanton?"

"The very same.—Can you tell whether she was of that family?"

"I know that she was."

"There was a Mr. Armstrong of the same college with myself at Cambridge, who I believe was of that family, but he was very much my junior. I think I have heard that he has now a living in Wiltshire?"

Ha! I thought within myself, *C'est fort singulier!*—You are, my good sir, uncle to Mrs. Northington, and you only *think that Mr. Armstrong has a living in Wiltshire?* Do you pretend, then, to make me believe that you are not perfectly acquainted with whatever relates to him? — After having heard from Mr. Northington such an ample confession of the pains taken by his wife's relations to influence her in giving up all thoughts of Mr. Armstrong and accepting him, can I believe that any near relation of hers does not know exactly what Mr. Armstrong's situation is? Honoured sir, there must be some motive for this affected ignorance. *We are fishermen all*, as the song says; and you, if I am not much mistaken, are practising your trade at this moment. The particular object for which you are angling I certainly do not see; but this seeming semi-demi-ignorance cannot be assumed for nothing, and I can angle as well as yourself. You bait with questions, I will endeavour to catch you with answers. A simple assentation or negation will probably best lead you on, so that your drift may at length appear; and to these, therefore, shall my answers be confined.

In pursuance of this determination I answered drily to the last question,—" He has, sir."

" Was he ever married?"

"He was."

"And has a large family?"

"No, sir."

"He has no family at all?"

"I beg your pardon, he has one son."

"And never had any other child?"

"Never."

"He perhaps married late in life?"

"When he was about three- or four-and-thirty."

"And his wife is still living?"

"Pardon me, she has been long dead."

"He used to take boys to educate, I have been told."

"You were misinformed, sir."

"Very strange! I was confidently told that he did."

"I assure you it is quite a mistake."

"He educated his own son entirely, however, did he not?"

"Entirely."

"He is said to be a very clever young man."

Oho! I here thought, you did not know at first whether Mr. Armstrong had a large family, or no children, and now you seem very well aware that he has only one son, whom he educated himself, and who is reckoned extremely clever. You should recollect yourself better,

kind sir, or you will never make a good angler. These reflections, however, passed only in my own mind; to him I answered not quite so laconically as before,—"He has good abilities, but is not particularly clever."

"And Mr. Armstrong never had any other pupil?"

"Only such as he instructed gratuitously."

"He was then kind in giving instruction gratis?"

"Extremely so."

"Which, I suppose, gave occasion to the idea of his taking pupils?"

"Very possibly."

"Is he reckoned a good preacher?"

"An excellent one."

"And a good parish priest?"

"It is impossible to find a better."

"That is saying a great deal indeed."

"Yet not more than the strict truth."

"Pardon me, but this seems a bold thing to affirm."

"Yet it may safely be affirmed of Mr. Armstrong."

"You speak with enthusiasm, Mr. Danville."

"Excuse me, sir, but I should be unpardonable in not doing so."

"You know Mr. Armstrong, then, intimately?"

"And am under the greatest obligations to him."

"Which you are certainly right to acknowledge;—but according to what I have heard, there are people who would not speak quite so enthusiastically."

"The world is full of malice, Mr. Anderson, and will not spare the very best of characters."

"Too true!—And I believe it to be true, also, that Mr. Armstrong's reputation stands generally fair in the world:—yet sometimes there are secret histories belonging to those whose characters are ostensibly the most unblemished, that will not bear to be investigated too closely."

Here my spirit was so roused within me that I could not adhere to my short answers any longer, but burst out with some warmth—"Excuse me, sir, if I observe, that it is often merely because people will not give themselves the trouble of investigating the truth of slanders brought against such characters, that it is presumed the characters themselves will not bear investigation. It is a pretty general foible among mankind to be pleased with tales of scandal, and rather to cherish them eagerly than to reprobate them as they deserve;—to

believe in them implicitly rather than search into their truth; nay, they will even feel angry with any one who would endeavour to undeceive them. Something of this kind I believe to be the case in the present instance. This is not the first time that strange innuendoes with regard to the character of Mr. Armstrong have reached me; to what they are intended to allude, I confess myself wholly at a loss to conjecture. I can however safely affirm, and I say it from the bottom of my soul,—I say it upon a long and intimate knowledge of him, and I would say it though I stood single in my opinion against a host of opponents,—that I believe the wide-extended globe does not contain a character nearer to perfection than his."

Mr. Anderson seemed not a little struck at the warmth with which I spoke, and, looking at me earnestly, said, "I stand corrected, Mr. Danville, and admire your honest eagerness. You have said that you are under great obligations to Mr. Armstrong, and it is most laudable in you thus to evince your sense of them. I was to blame, after you had stated this, to say a word to his disparagement: if you had the proper feelings which you have shown yourself to possess, you could not fail to be indignant at what you heard, and it was right that your

indignation should be shown. Give me your hand; trust me that what has passed has given you a high place in my esteem."

After so handsome an apology, it must have been a rancorous feeling which could make me withhold my hand, not that sentiment of proper indignation against unfounded slander which had just before inspired me. I therefore readily gave it, in token that my wrath was appeased.

"And now," proceeded Mr. Anderson, "I will freely own that, seeing you were well acquainted with Mr. Armstrong, I was ungenerously endeavouring to draw from you some information which might either confirm or confute the reflections I have heard cast upon his reputation. Perhaps you suspected my drift; for your answers were cautious, they seemed to have for their object the repelling what you thought an impertinent curiosity. Tell me freely, nor suppose that I shall be offended at your frankness, was not this the case?"

"Indeed, sir, since you invite me to be sincere, I will freely own that it was even so."

"I deserved it; but I will now deal with you more openly. Mr. Armstrong certainly does bear two different characters in the world; Heaven knows which is best deserved by him. Excuse me if I cannot now be more explicit;

perhaps a time may come—and indeed the disposition now shown by you is well calculated to invite my confidence—but at present 'tis best to say no more. Indeed our conversation must necessarily be dropped, for I think I hear my niece coming."

He was right; Mrs. Northington now came in, and after a little conversation upon unimportant matters I took my leave.

"I cannot tell whether the world may be right or wrong with regard to that young man," said Mr. Anderson after I was gone, "but he clearly, I think, does not suspect himself to be Mr. Armstrong's son. He has been defending him with a warmth which sons very seldom give themselves the trouble of assuming, when the question is nothing more than to defend a father."

"This is a random stroke of satire, uncle, which I hope the world in general does not deserve. I would fain think, without supposing that in this instance it was really a son defending a father's cause, that there are few sons who in defence of a father would not have shown equal warmth."

"Your sex is candid, my love, and you are one of the most candid of your sex; so that I think you and your friend Sam Danville must agree vastly well when Bernard Armstrong is

the subject of your conversation, as I suppose he has been more than once."

"It is scarcely possible, from the very particular circumstances under which I became acquainted with Mr. Danville, that his benefactor's name should not sometimes have been mentioned in conversation between us. But, my dear uncle, let me entreat you to spare me upon this subject! you know how delicate a one it has always been with me. If my feelings upon it have been censurable, if I have been too much disposed to exculpate one who certainly has been the occasion of great uneasiness to me,—whether wilfully or not, he alone who reads the heart can say,—yet on the other hand I must think his conduct has been condemned by others far too severely. If the matter were nicely investigated, it is surely at least possible that you as well as myself may appear to have been too ready to believe what we both so much wished, and to have given a mistaken interpretation to attentions, which ought to have been considered only as those common for a gentleman of polished manners to pay to one of the other sex."

"Well, my love, if I excuse him on this score, I must condemn his want of taste and discrimination, that he could know you so intimately, and then think you an object to receive only such common-place attentions; so, have it

which way you will, Bernard can never stand acquitted in my mind."

From the time that Mr. Carberry went out of town this spring, when I was expected to go down to New Lodge so very frequently, it was little in my power to make visits any where else. I did however call three or four times at Brompton, and was always received with much appearance of kindness and good will on the part of Mr. Anderson. In the short time that I was able to stay, Mr. Armstrong's name was never again mentioned; the conversation turned upon general topics, such as the news of the day and other trifling matters. Once only we happened to enter upon literary subjects, which insensibly led me to protract my visit to a much longer time than I had intended. At parting, Mr. Anderson took me very cordially by the hand, and said, "My good young man, I think less learning would have done for the coal wharf."

The last interview I had with Mr. Anderson was about a month after the death of Mr. Northington. This was at Mrs. Northington's house in Grosvenor Street, whither she was just returned, and her uncle was to leave her in a few days. I found him alone; when, after having talked over a little the recent death in the family, he said to me, "Mr. Danville, I was

once guilty of endeavouring to draw from you, by means of fishing and circumlocution, some particulars on which I wanted to be resolved relative to Mr. Armstrong. I then made an apology for the means I was using to obtain my ends; permit me now to renew those apologies, to condemn myself severely for behaviour which I acknowledge was wholly unjustifiable. As the best proof I can give that I sincerely think it was so, I shall now proceed in a very different way, and ask you a series of questions in very plain and direct terms, assuring you at the same time that I do not wish any to be answered which might involve you in a breach of confidence. If however you can with propriety satisfy me, I shall think myself exceedingly obliged."

I assured him that I felt much flattered at being treated by him in this confidential manner, and that I was not less disposed, when questioned with frankness, to answer frankly, than I had shown myself determined, when questioned circuitously, to reply in as short and dry a manner as possible.

"Well then," he said, "you were, sir, I understand, educated by Mr. Armstrong?"

"In a considerable degree, but not entirely. I was for some years a pupil at the Blue-coat hospital."

"But you have always lived on terms of intimacy in Mr. Armstrong's family?"

"He was so kind as to receive me in my infancy as the play-fellow of his son, and has ever since taken a degree of notice of me far beyond what my situation in life could give me reason to expect."

"You have been, in fact, if I am not very much misinformed, almost on the footing of a son to him?"

"Indeed, had I been his son, he could scarcely have shown me greater kindness, or received me at his house more, if I had been born in a rank of life no way inferior to himself."

"Then you have perhaps sometimes heard him mention my name?"

"No, indeed, sir."

"Not as a former friend?"

"Never, I can assure you."

"You surprise me.—But you have heard him frequently mention my niece?"

"Never, till, on my being deputed to relate to him the circumstances which led to Mr. Northington's accident, he made allusions to her almost involuntarily."

"That is extraordinary!—Even then, however, my name was not mentioned?"

"Indeed it was not.—All that Mr. Armstrong told me respecting his attachment to

Mrs. Northington was, that many years before her marriage he became acquainted with her while he was staying at the house of a friend in whose neighbourhood she lived."

"But never mentioned the name of that friend, or said that the lady in question was his relation?"

"Never, I can assure you. He painted to me in strong colours the lady's beauty, and the numberless amiable qualities of her mind and heart, and dwelt earnestly upon his strong attachment to her, and his hopes that the attachment had been reciprocal. Nor, he assured me, was it possible to have experienced a more cruel disappointment than he did, when, just at the moment that he found himself in a situation to have made a declaration of his sentiments, he learned that this much-admired object had bestowed herself upon another."

"How!—He had then intended to make such a declaration?"

"Most assuredly. He had only abstained from it so long, because he thought it ungenerous to attempt binding the lady by an engagement for the fulfilment of which no definite period could be assigned;—for he was resolved never to marry while his sisters were unprovided for."

"But he had long been engaged to another lady, to the Miss Middleton whom he afterwards married?"

"Pardon me sir,—he never thought of marrying her while Miss Westbourne remained unmarried; nor would he even then have thought of it, but form motives of compassion. He learned by accident that she had attached herself very strongly to him, and couldnever be happy but as his wife; that her health was even materially injured by this attachment; and he made it a point of conscience, since all hopes of his possessing the object of his love were annihilated, to sacrifice his feelings to his duty."

"Indeed!"

"Most certainly!—So he himself assured me; and I dare confidently affirm that he is incapable of having said it, if it had not been the strict truth."

"Good heavens! this is most strange!—I scarcely yet know how to belive it."

"What more, sir, can I say then for your conviction, or why should you still doubt? You see that the story I tell you comes from the fountain head itself; it has not been communicated to me after having passed through a variety of hands, from whom it might have received much mutilation or embellishment. If you cannot believe it such as I have the honour of relating it, you must either doubt my credibility or that of my informer."

"Neither of which I am, perhaps, authorized to doubt. Yet believe me, sir, your testimony in-

validates that of others which I have so long been accustomed to consider as authentic, that you can scarcely be surprised if, in spite of myself, I can with difficulty at once embrace the one and reject the other."

"I can enter readily into the force of that feeling; but you are perfectly welcome, sir, to make every inquiry you please into the truth of what I assert; you will find that I have not advanced any thing in which the matter of fact will not support me."

"Yet, according to this story, I cannot understand the terms upon which Miss Middleton visited at the rectory at Langham; for I was myself an eye-witness to the familiar manner in which she was received there."

"On that subject I can say nothing from my own knowledge, since I did not come into the world till two days after the marriage had taken place. But Mr. Armstrong's own sister, Mrs. Shelburne, who was only married about three quarters of a year before her brother, has told me that she was exceedingly surprised to hear of the marriage, as she never supposed him attached to Miss Middleton, or considered the latter in any other light than as the friend of her youngest sister;—and Mr. Armstrong himself assured me that he considered her rather as a fourth sister, nor had ever the least idea of making her his wife till urged to it by compassion."

"His compassion should have looked elsewhere."

"Yet allow me, sir to repeat, what you do not seem sufficiently to consider, that Miss Westbourne had then disposed of herself otherwise; else she would have been the object of Mr. Armstrong's decided choice."

"Indeed she ought to have been so. It was cruel to her, it was cruel to me, to have deluded us so far. If this conduct was intended as the result of delicacy, I must say that it was delicacy run mad,—delicacy refined till the sweet of it was wholly lost."

"It grieves me much, sir, to see you still consider the thing in this unfavourable point of view, and I wish it were in my power. . . . . . ." But I had no power to say more; for here the conversation was abruptly broken off by the entrance of two gentlemen upon business.

I thought that my presence would now perhaps be intrusive, and therefore took my leave, though not without much regret, as I wished exceedingly to have been able to carry on the conversation further, so as to explain every thing to Mr. Anderson. For I had now no doubt that he was the person to whom Mr. Armstrong alluded, when he expressed his deep regrets at his conduct with regard to Miss Westbourne having lost him the friendship of a person from whom he had, previously to that

unfortunate affair, received many acts of the greatest kindness. As I took my leave, he said to me, "We shall see you again soon, I hope, Mr. Danville?"—I bowed, and answered that I was much obliged to him. But since this was a period when I had very little leisure indeed for visiting, I had not an opportunity of calling again in Grosvenor Street till some time after, and then Mr. Anderson was gone. This was the last interview that I had with him before the period at which the History is now arrived.

I, however, saw Mrs. Northington occasionally, as long as Mr. Carberry lived; but when, in consequence of his death, and the difficulties that intervened with regard to his will, I determined on quitting London entirely, my intercourse with her necessarily ceased. I called to take my leave of her before I went out of town, but found her in very indifferent spirits. She expressed considerable regret at the suspension of our acquaintance, but said she hoped that I might be induced to return to town when the matter in dispute was settled, and that she should always be most happy to see me.

CHAPTER VIII.

A happy reunion after a very long separation.—A short biographical memoir, accompanied by an explanation of future views.—An extraordinary courtship, leading to extraordinary results.

It has appeared that for two days after Mr. Ethelred Armstrong's visit to New Lodge, nothing more had been heard of him by Mr. Shelburne, and that this only increased Katherine's surprise, and speculations upon the extraordinary conduct of her visitor. The truth was, that on the very evening of the day when his visit was made, a slight touch of the gout, to which he had for some time been occasionally subject, came on, which confined him to the house for a week, and suspended for so long a time the further prosecution of his plans. When he was able to move again, he made a second excursion to New Lodge, intending to inquire for his niece, and, throwing off all disguise, to discover himself to her, announcing at the same time his determination to hire the place. He also intended to explain fully his meaning, in the very ambiguous expression he had used concerning hiring the inhabitants as well as the house, by requesting her to consider herself thenceforwards as his daughter, and to exer-

cise even a more unbounded rule there than she had enjoyed during Mr. Carberry's life.

He was exceedingly disappointed, on arriving at the Lodge, to find himself foiled in projects on which he had fed with so much delight during his week's confinement, for that the bird was flown. Katherine, and her brother and sister, were by that time become inmates of the rectory at Langham. He, however, desired to look again over the house and grounds, before he could make up his mind about taking them; and in doing so, he asked a great many questions of the servants respecting the late inhabitants of the place, the answers to which confirmed more strongly his good opinion of his niece: he learnt besides, that she was gone down to the house of an uncle in Wiltshire, where she was now to live.

Poor uncle Ethelred returned to town rather disconsolate; but he soon determined to follow his niece to her retreat, and there execute the plan he had formed, of inviting her to return to New Lodge, as its mistress, and his adopted daughter and heir. To Langham then he repaired, and, stopping at the rectory, inquired whether Mr. Armstrong was at home. Receiving a reply in the affirmative, he desired to see him. The servant inquired his name. He said it was no matter, he might tell his master

that a gentleman wished to speak with him upon very particular business. Under this character then, and in this manner, was he introduced to a brother whom he had not seen for more than forty years. The rector of Langham was alone in his study; and thither the stranger was conducted, since it was there that all persons were introduced professing to come upon business. So many years passed under the influence of the burning sun of India had made a very considerable alteration in the countenance of Mr. Ethelred Armstrong; but the moment his brother Bernard cast his eyes upon him, he fancied they were features which he had somewhere seen before, though he could not immediately recollect where.

The visitor began by saying, that he must make many apologies for the intrusion: "but, sir," said he, "I saw advertised in the papers a few days ago a house to be let near Tunbridge Wells, which I am informed belongs to a relation of yours; and I thought that you would perhaps be so obliging as to answer some inquiries I wish to make concerning it."

"Any questions you wish, sir, I shall answer with pleasure."

"The minor to whom it belongs, I am told, is your nephew?"

"He is."

"You are, perhaps, his guardian?"

"Even so."

"You will let a lease till he is of age?"

"If that should be desired."

"You have a niece who now lives there, I understand?"

"Pardon me, she did live there, but has now left it."

All this time the questionist sat with his eyes turned towards, the window which looked upon the garden, as if anxiously seeking some object, in a way which appeared rather extraordinary for a perfect stranger. This caught the rector's attention; he looked at him steadfastly. Katherine had given him a very particular description of her singular visitant at New Lodge; the object before his eyes in every respect answered it. He looked again and again, while the stranger had sunk into a profound silence. The more attentively the rector examined the features, the more he felt convinced that they were not unknown to him. The sound of the voice, too, was not like one foreign to his ear; and as the stranger again turned his eyes towards him, as if to renew his questions, he started from his seat, and catching his hand eagerly, exclaimed, "Ethelred!"

"Bernard!" replied the other, returning the pressure of his hand with equal warmth, and

clapping him affectionately upon the shoulder, while tears stealing down the cheeks of both prevented for a few moments any further interchange of words. "Bernard," he said at length, "you know me then?"

"Yes, Ethelred," returned the rector, "though more than forty years of separation have changed materially the countenances of both, my heart, which was ever warmly attached to you, has never been changed; and that spoke to me in terms so plain, that I was sure I could not be mistaken."

"Heaven be thanked," replied the other, "that we have at length met again, and with hearts still the same! For believe me, Bernard, my sentiments towards you are as unchanged as yours towards me; and my heart somewhat revolted against the task I had imposed upon it, of appearing before you at first in the character of a stranger."

"Nor would it, indeed, wholly obey you; since I was first led to suspect the truth by a something which seemed to say that it could not be a stranger who was addressing me: yet, if you ask me what that was, I cannot tell; it was a nameless something better felt than described."

"Well, Bernard, your hand once more:—I could almost fancy now that it was but the

other day that we parted. Yet you were then a mere boy, and I would not pay you so ill a compliment as to say that you look like a boy still."

"How little did I suspect, when I rose up in the morning, the pleasure that was in store for me in the course of the day! Ethelred, I would ask so many questions, that I scarcely know where to begin. Two must, however, be put at once. How long have you been in England? and what made you think of coming hither first as a stranger?"

"As to the first, my dear brother, I reply that I have been about a fortnight in England. I had my motives for not announcing my arrival immediately, as you will learn from the explanation by which your second question must be answered. You are already well aware, that during the former part of my residence in India, my affairs were far from prosperous; but since I was disencumbered of my wife, and truly, Bernard, *disencumbered* is the proper term to use upon the occasion, I have succeeded much better. I have, indeed, now amassed an ample fortune, and, I can truly say, without having the least reason to reproach myself with its being in any way unjustly acquired. At length I resolved to return to my native country, and enjoy my fortune in the bosom of my

family, and of my former connections. But I was inspired, from the moment when this determination was made, with a whim not to let my family know that I was coming home a rich man. I knew that, appearing under that character, I had little reason to doubt of being sufficiently courted and caressed; but I could never have been satisfied that this was from any other motive than in the hope of being benefited by my wealth; and I am a conceited old fellow, desirous of being loved for myself alone. I determined, therefore, to appear among my relations as one returned in very moderate circumstances; and to bind myself in habits of intimacy with those alone from whom I met with such a reception as nothing but pure friendship, unconnected with any ideas of interest, could induce. It was for this reason that in my letters I only talked in general terms of beginning to think of returning home; that I never mentioned any specific time when I might be expected, nor ever said more respecting my circumstances, except that they were better than they had been. After a prosperous voyage, I reached once more my native shores. I landed at Falmouth, intending to proceed to London, and there get the information I wanted with regard to my family, as to where the respective branches were to be found, and then make

known to them my arrival after my own way. The captain of the vessel in which I came over landed with me, and we agreed to travel together to London. In our way he took me to dine with a friend of his at Exeter; and there, by an extraordinary combination of circumstances, I learnt the noble conduct of my niece Middleton, and the exemplary manner in which she had sacrificed her own personal interests to promote those of a brother and sister. I immediately thought that my fortune could never be better applied than in recompensing such disinterestedness; and resolved that, if upon further inquiry I found the story confirmed, I would immediately adopt her as my daughter, and make her my heir."

"Then it was you who went down to New Lodge about a week ago, who detained Katherine so long in showing you about, and furnished her so much field for speculation in the many questions you asked her;—so extraordinary, as she thought, in a stranger come only to look at the house!"

"She has told you, then, of my visit?"

"And made me the confident of some very serious alarms which it occasioned her."

"She thought, I suppose, that I almost made love to her?"

"And that not in a very honourable way."

"Ha! ha! ha!—Poor Kate!—Indeed, I must confess, that I did sometimes too much forget the character I had assumed, and abandon myself more than I ought to have done to the expression of my real feelings: and they were those of an uncle proud to a high degree of such a niece, and anxious to place her in a situation which he thought suitable to her extraordinary merits."

"She was indeed somewhat apprehensive that the situation in which you wished to place her was of a very different kind."

"Excellent girl!—Indeed I am rather ashamed of myself for alarming her in such a way, but it shall all be handsomely atoned for at last. So she fled hither in haste, I suppose, to get away from me?"

"Very true."—And here the good rector gave his brother an ample detail of all Katherine's apprehensions, and the steps she had taken in consequence; with the satisfaction she had many times expressed, since she came to Langham, at being out of the way of becoming the object of such unpleasant suspicions in future.

The Nabob laughed heartily, and said that he must have a little more amusement at the poor girl's expense, before he could disclose all his feelings and intentions with regard to her.

"I will have another little *équivoque* with her," said he, "in which you, Bernard, must assist me. I have excited alarms in her mind by my parting expressions at New Lodge; those alarms shall not be confirmed; but I will now appear before her as a suitor in an honourable way. What say you, Bernard, will you forward my plan?"

"With all my heart."

"Go then and tell her, that the gentleman whom she saw at New Lodge is deeply captivated with her; that he is rich, and offers himself as her husband, giving her a *carte blanche* to make her own terms. Bernard, put all this into as fine language as you please, for I dare say you will do it much better than I could; I only give you the substance of what I would have you say. One thing, however, tell me first, and that is, whether the poor child has any affair of the kind upon her hands already?—Has she any sweetheart, Bernard?"

"O dear, no!—at least I never heard of any thing of the kind."

"More fools the men in England,—that's all I can say upon it: but I will be sweetheart, and father, and every thing else to her; she shall have her own way in all respects, more than she'd have with ninety-nine husbands out of a hundred. Go then and seek for her, Ber-

nard, for I am as impatient to see her as if I really were a lover."

Away then went Bernard in search of his niece. He found her just come in from taking a walk with Walter and her little brother and sister. "I wish to speak a few words with you in private, my dear Katherine," said he, and they went together into the parlour.

"My good niece," he began, "I have a visitor now in my study who has been brought hither principally upon your account. You will not, perhaps, be very much surprised to hear that it is the same gentleman whose visit to New Lodge about ten days ago excited your curiosity so much."

"Indeed, uncle, I am both surprised and concerned at what you say. I was a little afraid of something of the kind, since I saw a carriage at your garden-gate which I thought appeared the same as that in which he came down to New Lodge. However, there cannot, surely, be any occasion for my seeing him now?"

"Ah, my love! I trust you will think differently when you know all. He came hither on finding that you had left New Lodge and were now my inmate. His visit is for the express purpose of making you proposals; not of such a nature as in your alarms you had

pictured to yourself, but of a nature perfectly honourable and highly flattering to you; proposals which you may, consistently with the strictest honour and principle, accept without hesitation, and which I flatter myself will be perfectly conformable with your inclinations. He said that he would gladly hire the inhabitants of New Lodge with the house. You thought this a speech which, putting the most favourable construction upon it, must be considered as one of mere frothy compliment, but it was not said without meaning. He knew your character before by reputation,—the sight of you confirmed the good impression which report had made upon his mind,—and the result is, that he seriously wishes what then appeared to be said as a mere random flourish. He is now in my study, where he solicits to see you, and explain his mind to you himself. He is rich, and makes the most liberal offers:—will you go and hear them from his own mouth?"

"My dear uncle, you cannot imagine how much you astonish me;—nor can I comprehend offers so liberal made upon such an imperfect knowledge of me. They are flattering, I own; but surely, uncle, you must yourself feel, that even if I were ever so well disposed to listen to them, it would be great folly to enter into any engagement upon so slight an acquaintance.

I will, however, freely own, that though I was at first very much pleased with the appearance of this gentleman, and thought he seemed an extremely good sort of man, yet I do not believe that I could ever attach myself to him as a husband; indeed, as you well know, the favourable impression which his first appearance made upon me was afterwards very much diminished. There is, besides, an immense disparity in our ages; and though this might not be an insuperable objection, it does seem a very great one. In short, I feel so little inclination to matrimony at all, and especially to such a disproportionate union, that it would be much more satisfactory to me, uncle, if you would be the bearer of my sentiments,—and say that I feel extremely flattered by the distinction shown me, but that I must beg wholly to decline the gentleman's offers, and entreat that the affair may not proceed a step further."

"Yet why not say this yourself, Katherine?"

"Indeed, uncle, it is, you know, so disagreeable to reject a man's kindness in this peremptory way, that I cannot do it without some unpleasant feelings, and I would much rather be spared the communication in my own person."

"It is surely, however, a little hard, deeply as he seems enamoured, to dismiss him without

even giving him an opportunity of pleading his cause. Nay, who knows whether an hour's conversation might not effect a great change in your sentiments!"

"There is not the least chance of that, I can assure you, uncle; and if my seeing him would give any encouragement to his entertaining such ideas, it would be a strong additional reason with me for declining the interview."

"At any rate, I am confident that it will soften the disappointment, if he receives his dismission from your own mouth. Nay, since your heart is at present wholly disengaged, it appears more reasonable not to reject his suit entirely, till a further acquaintance authorizes the conviction that you never can attach yourself to him; a proposition which, as matters now stand, must be considered only as assumed on your part."

Katherine's countenance was in a moment suffused with a deep blush. Her uncle saw it, but did not then perfectly comprehend its meaning, or suppose that he had himself been the innocent cause of it by the simple observation that her heart was wholly disengaged. It, however, threw her spirits into such a state of confusion, that she was no longer able to contest the point with him, but reluctantly yielded to the conference he solicited. She

followed him, therefore, to the study, assuring him by the way, that though she consented to be the bearer of her own answer, she was not the less firmly decided what it should be. "I can never," she said, "endure the thoughts of entering into such a solemn engagement for the sake of fortune alone; and it is very certain, that in accepting this offer I could be influenced by no other motive."

"And I would be one of the last persons in the world to recommend your marrying from mere mercenary views; but, at the same time, I think that a connection so advantageous should not be too hastily rejected."

Katherine looked confused as she appeared before the stranger. "I have imparted to my niece," said the rector, "your generous proposals; and now, sir, I leave you to plead your own cause." So saying, he withdrew.

"Miss Middleton," her uncle began, "I have in the first place to make many apologies for some indiscretions of which I was perhaps guilty when I had first the honour of seeing you. Mr. Armstrong has, I trust, fully explained the sentiments which threw me so much off my guard,—which occasioned what I acknowledge must have had to you an appearance of transgressing the rules of good-breeding.— He has told you, I hope, that though I had not

the honour of knowing you personally before that day, yet that the name of Miss Middleton was well known to me; and I was impressed with the strongest admiration of her character. Even before I saw the inhabitant of New Lodge, I was exceedingly disposed to wish that in case I should hire it she should remain its mistress; how much more, then, after I had seen her!"

"Indeed, sir, I hope I shall be excused interrupting you; I wished my uncle to have taken upon himself the task of speaking for me, but he was desirous that I should speak for myself. I wished him to have spared me the pain of appearing not sufficiently to appreciate your flattering opinion of me;—but, sir, I must hope that you will not urge this matter any further. I assure you I am extremely sensible of your flattering sentiments; but we are so little known to each other, that we cannot form any opinion how far such a connection as you do me the honour of proposing might contribute towards promoting the happiness of either."

"It is very true that I am perhaps presumptuous in flattering myself, that at my years I could in one interview have made myself so far agreeable to one so young and so admired, as to think of her listening with favour to my suit. But I do not desire the matter to be precipitated; let me only be allowed to improve the little ac-

quaintance I have with you at present; let me be permitted to visit you freely; in time I hope you may be brought to entertain more favourable sentiments of me, so that my suit may be renewed with better hopes of success."

"I beg your pardon, sir, but I think it very dishonourable not to be perfectly explicit in cases like the present. I have certainly no authority to say that you shall not be received here as a visitor; but I must insist upon your visits not being considered as to me."

"This is hard indeed!—Reflect a little, and I hope that such a sentence may be recalled. Your uncle assures me that your affections are at present entirely disengaged, else I had never thought—"

Here Katherine's eyes, which had been hitherto turned towards him, were suddenly cast down; while a blush, even deeper than what had stolen over her cheeks when her uncle Bernard made a remark to the same effect, now again seemed to contradict the truth of the proposition. This did not pass unnoticed by her pretended lover, and immediately raised suspicions in his mind that his brother, in making such an assertion, had conceived himself more fully in possession of the secrets of his niece's heart than he was in reality: choosing, however, to affect not to observe what she

seemed very anxious to conceal, he proceeded:—"Had I not known your heart to be entirely free, madam, I had never presumed to entertain those hopes; but since that is the case, I am extremely unwilling to abandon them. All I ask is, to be permitted to enter into a fair competition with others who have the same sentiments towards you;—that I alone may not be refused the privilege of entertaining hope. I have told your uncle, madam, that my fortune is ample;—it shall be entirely at your disposal. Rich beyond measure in the possession of yourself, I would ask no other wealth. My worldly treasures would only be of value to me, inasmuch as they could be made subservient to promoting your happiness."

"Indeed, sir, you distress me beyond measure; your offers are too generous,—would that I were worthy of them!—but it cannot be. Let me entreat you then to urge me no further, and to permit me now to withdraw." So saying, she rose up extremely agitated, while tears which she vainly endeavoured to conceal were streaming down her cheeks.

Her uncle saw and was struck with it. It cannot be my proposals, he said within himself, which have produced this effect; there is something more in all this than her friends are at

present aware of. He thought, too, that the farce he was playing seemed rather to be turning into tragedy; that it was time, therefore, to come to the *denouement*, and he said,—"I must not, then, entertain a hope of ever becoming your husband?"

"Indeed you must not."

"This sentence must be considered as irrevocable?"

"It must."

"Well, then, my beloved girl, give me your hand; and if I must never hope to call you wife, what think you of becoming my daughter?"

"Sir!" said Katherine, starting, and drawing back her hand, which he had attempted to take.

"Be not alarmed, my Katherine!—If you had rather have a younger husband, for which I cannot wholly blame you, let my fortune, at least, be laid at your feet in another way,—as the tribute of an uncle who can never be sufficiently proud of such a niece."

"Uncle!" repeated Katherine.

"Yes; uncle.—You are astonished, my dear girl; but pardon me for having sported with you thus, and let me clasp you to my heart as henceforward my daughter; or, if you still doubt, wait till your uncle Bernard is sum-

moned, who will confirm my having the same title with himself to an uncle's share in your affections."

Katherine was so astonished that she had no power to speak; and still half hesitating as to what she was to believe, withdrew not her hand, which he had taken, but looked earnestly at him, as if to say,—"Is this really so?—or is it not some trick he is desirous of playing me, finding his fair suit rejected?"

She was soon, however, relieved from this embarrassment by the entrance of uncle Bernard, who confirmed to her the affecting truth, that in this pretended suitor she had found a real admirer; one whose admiration, too, was founded upon a basis never likely to be shaken; upon a strong veneration for, and participation in, those noble qualities of the mind and heart, which she had on a recent occasion so eminently displayed.

A general explanation on all sides ensued; when uncle Ethelred again entreated to be pardoned for having twice sported with her in such a way. He assured her, that he loved her the better for having refused him so peremptorily as a husband, since it gave him a convincing proof that her heart was not mercenary: as to the other proposal he had made, it would be time enough, he said, to talk further about it when

they should become better acquainted. On one thing only he must insist, and would take no refusal, that his fortune should make up to her whatever she had sacrificed for the sake of her brother and sister. Katherine, quite overcome, could answer only with tears:—she was even forced to retire awhile to compose her spirits, so much was she affected by her new uncle's generosity and kind expressions towards her.

CHAPTER IX.

An important discovery imparted, with the animadversions made upon it.—Resolutions to prosecute the discovery further, and an unexpected light thrown upon the matter.—Old propensities long suspended beginning to return.

In consequence of the explanations which had taken place at Langham, Mr. Ethelred Armstrong invited himself to be his brother's guest for some little time;—"I am," said he, "too much of a lover to be able to separate myself again immediately from my beloved, though only a daughter; and I hope I shall at least convince her that I can make a good father, though the rogue would not have such an old frump for a husband. I shall rest therefore in the hope that, when I go to take possession of my house, she will not refuse to accompany me."

He wrote to Mr. Shelburne, explaining who he was, and sending very kind messages to his sister and her family. He desired to be considered from that time as the tenant of New Lodge; and as to the terms on which it was to be hired, he left that entirely to himself and the other trustees: money was no object, he said, to him, in comparison with having a house

to offer his niece, which he thought she would like to inhabit.

"Brother," he took an early opportunity of saying, as he and the rector were walking about the grounds belonging to the rectory, "you seem to have made a strange mistake in assuring me that this good girl's affections were wholly disengaged."

"Indeed I thought so," said brother Bernard.

"Did she ever tell you so?"

"I really never thought of asking."

"Well, if she be not in love, and pretty far gone too, I never yet saw a girl that was."

"And with whom?"

"Nay, now, you are going much too fast. That is a question which I profess myself wholly incapable of deciding. You are more likely to be able to settle this point, since you know so much more what acquaintance and connections she has, and who among them is likely to have made an impression upon her heart. I only know for certain that somebody has."

"You are very discerning, brother. But what makes you so extremely confident of your discovery?"

"Lord bless you! if you had but seen her when, by way of urging my mock suit upon her, I said that her uncle had assured me her

affections were disengaged! Poor thing! I never saw any one blush of a deeper scarlet, while at the same time she cast down her pretty rogues' eyes, and looked so foolish, that the thing was not to be misunderstood;—it was all as much as to say, 'he is a bold man who dares take upon himself to answer for such a thing; but, indeed, uncle Bernard is here under a strange mistake.'—She could not have spoken more plainly if she had said this in so many words."

"You really think so?"

"Think so!—I am as sure of it as that I have been wandering about India for more than forty years;—as that I have been up the Ganges and down the Ganges, and up and down again and again, and am safe and happy in England at last."

"Indeed, I am as much at a loss as yourself, to guess who can be the object of her attachment. She has lived so extremely retired for the last three years, that she has hardly seen any body to fall in love with; and she has scarcely been down here long enough to have become already so desperately in love with my son Walter."

"O no, no! she is not in love with him. Though let me tell you, Bernard, I think your son would have been a very lucky fellow if it

had been so. I had myself a little suspicion at first that it might be he, especially when I saw him playing the gallant so much to her. But no; I understand these matters tolerably well, and 'tis not he, I am sure."

"I assure you I cannot guess."

"Well, well, when we are a little more acquainted, I must try if I cannot win her over to make me her confident, and tell me the whole story. Then, by Jove, brother, let him be who he will, rich or poor, if he be but a deserving man, and one who she thinks will make her happy,—provided too he loves her as well as she deserves to be loved,—I shall take all the rest upon me. I will have a son to comfort my old age, as well as a daughter; aye, and I'll dance at their wedding into the bargain, if the gout does not happen to have laid me fast at the moment. My house will be big enough for them both, as well as for little Ned and Sophy, and as many grand-children as they choose to furnish it with; or, if not, I'll build them nurseries as fast as they provide inhabitants for them."

"Well, my dear brother, I can only say that if this be really so, you are more discerning than I am, for I never suspected any thing of the kind. This, however, I will take upon me to say, that if Kate does indeed appear to

have disposed of her affections, I am well convinced we shall find that they are not unworthily placed."

"Though it would not be a very easy matter to find a man worthy of her. Yet if he be among the best that are to be found, we must make ourselves contented, and try to make Kate happy."

By the time that I arrived at Langham for the Easter vacation, uncle Ethelred and his niece Katherine had got to be upon very sociable terms; and it began to be blazed abroad in the neighbourhood, that he was a rich uncle just returned from India, who intended to make her his heir, for he was so proud of her that he made no secret of his intentions:—he was, on the contrary, rather eager to talk about her, to proclaim her merits, and the recompense he destined them.

On my arrival, therefore, I found my father extremely occupied with this matter; nor could he refrain from beginning upon it as soon as the first transports at meeting again after so long a separation were over. To be sure, he said, there never was a time in his life that seemed so long to him, he thought Easter never would have come this year. Though, God knows, he was not apt to complain of time being long, but to wait patiently for every

thing, which that was what every body ought to do; yet now, God forgive him! he could not help thinking the time long: however, it was all past and over, and he was thankful that every thing had gone so well. "'Tis a good thing, Sam," he said, "that there was law to be had, and that all is now as poor Mr. Carberry wished, excepting what concerns you and Miss Kitty, which it seems quite hard that Mr. Maurice should have had his wicked will so as to put you and she aside, though that is not so bad as if he had got the money for himself. But as for that, God can make you both amends, if it should be his will. And I have the best possible news to tell you, Sam, about Miss Kitty. There's an uncle of hers that nobody hardly know'd any thing at all about, whether he was rich or poor, only folks always used to think that he was not over and above well in the world, because he had a wife that made a hand of the money as fast as he could get it; aye, and faster too. But this was not in England; it was out there, a great way off in India, which, they say, that is a mighty place indeed for making away with money, as well as for getting it; and for that matter it is not every body who goes there that gets their money over and above honestly, as folks say, for there's a deal of cheating and bam-

boozling, and taking what's not their own, or else they are strangely belied. Miss Kitty's uncle, however, he was no such kind of man, which, to be sure, nobody could expect that a brother of Mr. Armstrong's would do wrong, else there must be a strange difference between 'em; and nobody could say, though they was brothers by name, that they was brothers by nature; but 'twas all fair and above board with Miss Kitty's uncle, nobody wronged for him, all fairly earned. So after his wife died that he had not her to stry his earnings for him; and 'tis mortal hard upon a man, when his wife, instead of helping to get money, only stries it; but then he got on apace, and now he's come home with bags and bags full of money; nobody can guess how rich he is. Well, he gets to England, just as all this affair of poor Mr. Carberry's will was over; and he was overjoyed to hear what Miss Kitty had done, and how good she had been to her little brother and sister, and he says that nobody who was born a princess could have behaved more nobly. So he means to adopt her for his own daughter, and she shall have all his money, he says, when he dies, and shall live with him, and do whatever she pleases, and have as much money as she pleases; and he's going to hire Mr. Carberry's house, down in

the country, where he died, poor man! and thêre they are all going to live, Miss Kitty, and Master Edward, and Miss Sophy, and all of 'em: and Mr. Ethelred, that's the name of Miss Kitty's uncle: he is now at the rectory, and a mighty good-looking old gentleman he is, so you'll nigh hand see him, Sam."

"Indeed, father, I am very glad to hear such good news."

"Aye, Sam, so I was sure you would be, and so must every body that knows any thing about Miss Kitty, and what a nice young lady she is; for to be sure, Sam, as you've often said in your letters, it quite does one's heart good to see her kindness to her little brother and sister, which, I am sure, their poor mamma herself could not be more like a mamma to 'em. So now I think 'tis quite true what is said in Psalm xxxviith, verse 25th, 'I have been young, and now am old, and yet never saw I the righteous forsaken:'—because I think to be sure every body must believe that God has done all this out of his goodness to reward Miss Kitty. Don't you think so, Sam?"

"Yes, indeed, father."

"And therefore, Sam, it's my thought that we may be more than ever sure he'll make you amends too in his good time, and

who knows how soon? may be when we least think of it. For who could suppose, when Miss Kitty gave up her fortune, that before another year was gone and over, she'd have such an extraordinary piece of good luck befal her? And the same may happen to you, Sam; which, though it should not please God to reward you here, as you have been an honest man, and grateful too into the bargain, you'll be rewarded hereafter we may be sure, and God's will be done, whatever it be!"

"Aye, father, I say Amen with all my heart."

"Nay, for that matter, I'm sure my old Hannah and I, we had much rather see you honest than rich; though if it had pleased God that you should have got rich in the coal trade, and been Lord Mayor, we should have been as thankful as possible. And so we are very thankful now, because you know we can't have every thing; and if you never ride in the Lord Mayor's coach, why, mayhap, as you have gone back to college, you may take a fancy to be a clergyman at last, and then I shall hear you preach, and that will be a still greater pleasure.—Well, and how do you like college now, Sam?"

"Tolerably well, father."

"Better, I suppose, than when you was there before?"

"O, much better."

"Well, thank God for that!"

"Father, don't you think I had better go and call upon Mr. Armstrong?"

"Yes, do, Sam; for you've no notion how he seems to long like to see you, and Mr. Walter too. Moreover, Sam, you'll see then what you think about Mr. Walter and Miss Kitty, for some people fancies they have a great liking to each other, which you know so I always thought when I see 'em together a great while ago at Brighton. And it's my thought now that it was true enough, only then that lady as he went after came in the way; but now that Mr. Walter has found his mistake about her, who knows but what he may be for taking Miss Kitty again? Besides, as Miss Kitty's uncle is so rich, that would be quite a good thing for Mr. Walter, and he'd have no occasion to be a clergyman, or a painter, only to be a gentleman, and do just whatever he likes."

I set off then to make my visit at the rectory, ruminating deeply upon all that I had just heard. Some obscure hints of this change in Katherine's prospects had before reached me in

a letter from Walter, as well as by the voice of common rumour. Walter, however, said no more than that Katherine had lost one father, but had found another who would more than compensate her losses: the particulars of the story, he added, were too long to be there inserted, as he wrote in haste, but I should hear them all at my approaching visit to Langham. That I most sincerely rejoiced in her good fortune, I could say with the strictest truth, though it seemed, if possible, to raise a more formidable barrier than before between her and me. Yet, the moment that this idea obtruded itself upon me, it was resolutely repressed; I even reproached myself with having suffered it to pass only in this transitory way through my mind, and strove eagerly to impress myself with the sad truth that her much or little fortune could never make that change in our relative situations, which would remove the grand stumbling-block to my wishes being realised.

Again, what my father had said respecting Walter and Katherine occasioned me reflections perhaps even of a more heart-rending nature. Too well was I aware what ought to be my feelings upon this subject; too sadly was I sensible how different they actually were from what they ought to be. I knew that it was incumbent

upon me to rejoice in whatever would contribute to the happiness of either, but I knew that the secret sentiments of my soul would be any thing rather than those of joy; I felt that I never could see Walter again with any pleasure, for I never could behold him without sensations of the most corroding envy. I was several times exceedingly inclined to measure back my steps, and go any where rather than to the rectory to see Walter in a situation in which I should know not whether most to love or to hate him; yet how escape without going there at all? and if I must go, it was as well done at once. Besides, if I were to return home, it was probable that my father would again talk of Katherine, and this was scarcely less to be deprecated than the other; he had already talked upon the subject till I was forced to propose going to the rectory in order to fly from him.

Thus harassed, I could not steer my course directly to the hospitable roof, whither I had formerly never turned but with sensations of the truest delight; I took a circuitous route, and wandered about for an hour, before I had resolution to approach the house. By that time I had reasoned myself into appearing with something like composure, and had veiled with as cheerful a look as I could assume the sadness that reigned in my heart. I was ushered

into the parlour, where I found the whole party assembled at tea. I received, if possible, a more cordial welcome than ever from the excellent rector and Walter; they were even lavish in their expressions of pleasure at seeing me; and Mr. Armstrong pressed my hand with an emotion which seemed to say that it was the result of those increased feelings of affection to which he had alluded in his letter as the result of my late conduct. I was rejoiced beyond measure to see him with a countenance which might really be called one of perfect health; and, besides, I do not know that I ever saw him look so cheerful and happy. There was something in this appearance so very gratifying to me, that I forgot for a moment my own feelings, and expressed with some warmth the pleasure I received from seeing his good looks, which, I added, I hoped were not deceitful.

He assured me with many thanks that they were not, that he was remarkably well; but he said it was with regret he must observe that he could not return my compliments. "Indeed, my dear Samuel," said he, "you have studied yourself quite thin at Cambridge; I was wholly unprepared to see such an alteration; we must insist upon your being very idle while you are here. '*Much study, we know, is a weariness to*

the flesh,' and you exhibit a practical illustration of the truth of this axiom. By making you idle, however, I hope we shall recruit your health."

"I told Sam the last time I saw him," said Walter, "that I was sure he was in love, notwithstanding his demure looks whenever I talked to him about certain young ladies of his acquaintance; he always denied the fact, but I am now more than ever confirmed in my opinion."

I cannot say how miserable I was made by these remarks; I knew not which way to look, I was unable to speak, and had the most painful struggles to repress the tears that were rushing to my eyes. At this moment Edward and Sophia, hearing I was in the parlour, ran in, and coming up to me, their interesting artless manners and expressions of joy at seeing me overcame me completely. This was, however, rather a fortunate circumstance, since it furnished me with something like an excuse for the emotions which I had no longer any power to restrain. It was the first time I had seen them since I stood forward as their champion; and I might fairly be allowed, considering all that had passed, not to be able to see them unmoved. Mr. Armstrong and Walter seemed to perceive and share to a certain degree in my feelings; and the former studiously in a few minutes gave such a turn to the conver-

sation as left me the means of recovering myself gradually, nor was any thing more said to confuse or embarrass me during the remainder of my visit.

It was, however, matter of sufficient embarrassment to me to feel myself in the presence of Katherine. I had been so sensible of the necessity of controlling my feelings in the frequent intercourse which had unavoidably subsisted between us during the last three months of Mr. Carberry's life, that I had acquired such a sort of habitual command over them as to be able to see her without pain: it was even a source of delight to me to enjoy her society, notwithstanding the restraint with which it was accompanied. But a long absence, combined with the additional reasons I now had to consider her as one of the most perfect of her sex, awakened again, irresistibly, sensations which had not been subdued without the most powerful exertions. I found that I loved her more passionately than ever, and that there would be no possibility of restraining myself from betraying my secret by any other means than by resolutely determining never to see her more. When I quitted the rectory, therefore, after an hour's stay, it was with the feeling that I had seen her for the last time in my life; and I took the path to a little wood, not a quarter of a mile off, intending

to wander about there till I had so far recovered the first shock of this resolution, as to be able to venture home and encounter my father's inquiries and observations.

I had not, however, proceeded many steps when I felt myself pulled by the arm, and turning round saw Walter at my side. "Samuel," he said, "for Heaven's sake tell me what is the meaning of this!"

"The meaning of what, Walter?" I replied, scarcely able to articulate the words; but still continuing my way towards the wood.

"Whither are you going?—what would you do?—what agitates you thus?" he anxiously inquired.

"'Tis only a swimming in the head to which I have of late been a good deal subject, and nothing relieves it so much as air and exercise."

"Indeed! is that all? I assure you I was exceedingly alarmed."

"You are very kind; but there is no reason to be so."

"Yet a swimming in the head is an ugly thing."

"I believe it is merely the effect of too close application to study."

"I hope it is no more."

"You may be sure of it."

"However, let me tell you, I do not think it

a complaint to be neglected; I charge you therefore to get good advice for it, if you find it return frequently."

"You are kind, and your injunctions shall be obeyed."

"And now, Sam, let me tell you that I have been exceedingly alarmed lest I had touched a tender string, and been in great measure the occasion of those emotions which were but too evident soon after you came in. I made a silly remark upon your being grown thin, by which you seemed so much affected that I was apprehensive there was really something of love in the case, and that what I intended as innocent raillery was no joke to you."

"O indeed I took it only as a joke, so pray say no more upon the subject."

"Not upon your love, but I have a great deal to say upon my own."

"As how?"—Scarcely was my faltering tongue able to pronounce these two short syllables: I dreaded what I was to hear, I felt assured that he was going to tell me of his happiness as the accepted lover of Katherine, and my head began to turn round in good earnest.

"Why thus," he said.—"Three years are now elapsed, my good friend, since my unfortunate affair, nor in all that time have you ever heard me rave, as I used to do formerly, upon

the subject of female charms. Devoted to study and rural occupations, that inflammability which had been my bane, which I had had so much reason to deplore, seemed no longer to form a part of my nature. The precipice to the brink of which it had led me was always before my eyes, it seemed to hold out a warning to beware of getting in like manner entangled again, and I considered my affections as for ever chilled; I believed that it was not in the power of woman again to make an impression upon them. I was indeed the more confirmed in my opinion, from the indifference with which I found that I regarded the young women of our neighbourhood, even some who were generally esteemed both pretty and pleasing. But the time at length arrived when I was to be undeceived. The lovely Katherine came,—I had long before been very much disposed to love her, I soon found my former inclinations revive with tenfold force, and in three days my heart was devotedly hers."

This was what I expected, what I dreaded to hear;—my doom seemed now irrevocably sealed. Gladly would I have cut the story short; but even if I could have considered myself justified in saying any thing which implied that the subject was painful to me, it was now out of my power to utter a syllable. We

had reached the wood, and I had seated myself upon a bench just at its entrance, leaning with my back against the tree under which it was placed, or I know not how I could have supported myself; while the dusk of evening coming on apace, assisted the shade of the trees in concealing from my companion such a distraction in my countenance as must otherwise inevitably have betrayed me. He proceeded:

"Sam, what shall I say!—I could almost wish for a moment that I had not been mistaken when I apprehended you the victim of disappointed passion, since 'tis only from having been in a similar situation yourself that you could enter fully into the cruel disappointment I have experienced.'

O that word *disappointment!*—I cannot describe the effect which it had upon me; I can only suppose that it produced a sensation very similar to what is produced upon a malefactor with the rope round his neck when he hears the word *reprieve*. My heart, which before seemed oppressed by a burden so heavy as almost to suspend its powers of motion, now beat with such rapidity that it would have been difficult to keep pace with it in numbering the strokes, the blood at the same time rushing eagerly into my face, which before I had felt to be wholly pale and wan. The idea of Katherine not irrevocably

lost to me was all I could think of, not a grain of sympathy could I bestow upon my friend, nothing but a completely selfish feeling had possession of me. "Disappointment, Walter?" I said. My heart reproached me with the exclamation as one of deep hypocrisy, as if I wished to insinuate to him that I felt for his disappointment. Alas! if the truth must have been confessed, I sincerely rejoiced in it, in spite of the severity with which my heart reproved that joy.

"Yes, Sam," he said, "disappointment. You who know Katherine so well will be able to appreciate the extent of it more justly than it could be appreciated by another. You will, however, perhaps, condemn the precipitation with which I acted, when I tell you that after the lapse of only three days more I could no longer restrain myself, but made her an ample confession of the state of my heart."

"But did not find her heart responsively inspired?"

"Alas, no!—'Walter,' she said, 'believe me, I feel much flattered by the sentiments you express, and lament sincerely that I cannot answer them as you wish. As a relation and friend I always have entertained a very sincere regard for you, and I trust that nothing will ever abate that regard; but I can never go

further. Excuse my speaking in such very plain terms: but my heart is incapable of trifling with any one; and if I were to speak less plainly, it might perhaps appear like giving reason to hope that my sentiments might in time be changed. I will not say that I am irrevocably determined never to marry, but I think it in the highest degree improbable that I ever should. I have always had my doubts, whether on the whole the cares and anxieties attendant on wedlock do not more than counterbalance the superior sources of happiness which it presents; —whether the calm of a single life does not on the whole offer, to our sex at least, the greater aggregate of happiness. I will not take upon myself positively to pronounce that it is so, but I think that much may be said in its favour. In my case, my dear cousin, I have a tie in my little sister which I can never forgo. A charge so solemnly bequeathed to me as she was by the best of mothers, has a claim of such urgency, that I am not sure whether I could be justified in taking upon me other ties to divide my attention. But be this as it may, I really feel at present such a determined repugnance to the thoughts of marrying, that I must hope you will not think of repeating the proposals you have now made.'—Sam, what say you? are not these rather unaccountable sentiments for a

young woman to entertain, and very severe upon our sex?"

"Very much so indeed."

"I was at first, I own, cruelly hurt: however, I have endeavoured to reconcile my mind to the matter as well as I can, and I now feel tolerably satisfied; it is something, that I am in no danger of seeing Katherine in the possession of another."

"That is indeed a great satisfaction.—And does Mr. Armstrong know of this?"

"He does not. If I had found my beloved girl disposed to lend a favourable ear to my suit, the matter would have been immediately imparted to him; but as things are, Katherine and I agreed that we had rather the whole transaction should remain a secret between ourselves. I tell it to you, because I never consider you as included in any injunction to secrecy, nor ever kept any thing relating to myself a secret from you, excepting on one occasion, when I had abundant reason to repent it."

Here again my heart reproached me, that while he was dealing thus frankly and openly with me, I was unable to return his sincerity with equal confidence on my part. But I felt that I should be more culpable in making him too much than too little my confident; and that though I might

regret, I must not infringe upon the secrecy I had hitherto observed.

We talked on for some little time upon this subject, on which I could now listen to him with tolerable calmness, as I was not listening to the accepted lover of Katherine: at length we parted, each returning to his respective home.

What an abundant field for reflection was here opened to me! My heart was certainly very much relieved on one point, by hearing of the improbability of Katherine's ever marrying. I could not deny that it was a very selfish feeling, but love is a very selfish passion. I might have pretended that I sympathized extremely with my friend in his disappointment; but my heart would imperiously have contradicted the sentiment, and it was better to say nothing about it. Still I found myself unequal to the task of seeing her, and my resolution of the day before remained unrescinded. I determined to make my present visit at Langham very short, and future ones I hoped would be rendered less painful to me, as a prospect now appeared of the rectory not being Katherine's permanent place of residence.

CHAPTER X.

A conversation within doors, as well as without.—Talents at divination asserted, and largely exemplified.—The merits of old saws and moral aphorisms.—A commotion in the blood authoritatively repelled.

WHILE the conversation above recorded passed between Walter and myself, the rectory had been the scene of a not unimportant dialogue.

"Brother," said Mr. Ethelred Armstrong, before I had quitted the room two minutes, "I want to speak with you in your study."

It is to be observed, that this was the first time Mr. Ethelred and myself had seen each other. I had no doubt when I went into the room who he was, being well aware that I might expect to see him; but he had not the same clue to the knowledge of me, and without a formal introduction it was impossible that he should be aware who I was. This introduction had been neglected by Mr. Armstrong, probably from absence of mind, so that the stranger brother only heard me called Samuel with an air of familiarity which indicated my being upon a very sociable footing in the house.

When arrived in the study, "Brother," said Mr. Ethelred, "who is that young man that has just now been here?"

"He is the same that I have once or twice mentioned to you in conversation; young Danville, the co-witness with Katherine upon the late trial. Indeed I was very negligent in not introducing him to you."

"Whew-w-w! — What, your blacksmith's son?"

"The same."

"Well, well, it can't be helped, however."

"What do you mean, brother?"

"Mean, my good brother? I should have thought that plain enough."

"I really do not understand you."

"Not that he's the man?"

"Indeed I am wholly at a loss to guess what can be passing in your mind."

"Why, this is passing in my mind, that he is the man who has made the tender impression I told you of upon my little Kate's heart."

"Dear Ethelred, how came you to fancy such a thing?"

"'Tis no fancy, I promise you, 'tis as sure as that I am here."

"What can make you think this?—I never saw any symptoms that led me to suspect an attachment between them, and I believe Sa-

muel so thoroughly well principled, that I cannot suppose he would have carried on such an affair in an underhand way."

"As to his principles, I know nothing about them,—and as to how the affair has been carried on I will not pretend to say;—but of this I am sure, that if ever in my life I saw a boy and girl desperately in love with each other, that young man and my Kate are."

"Indeed you surprise me, brother. I never had the least suspicion of such a thing, and cannot conceive how in so short a time you have been led to suspect it."

"Brother Bernard, you are a very good sort of man in your way, an excellent man, I do not know a better, but as to these kind of matters you are but a mere novice; you have not the keen sight that I have into the fancies of young people, and I tell you once more that this is as certain as that you are your own mother's son."

"But again I must ask your reasons for supposing it."

"You know, I told you the other day, that I was sure Kate had got some fancy of the kind in her head; that some tender impression had been made upon her heart, and I knew very well that I should find out the man if I did but chance to see them together.

I was therefore ready to be upon the watch whenever I saw any visitor come into the room that I thought likely to have done the mischief. The moment that I saw this Samuel, he appeared to me such a personable youth as might easily catch the eye of a pretty lass; so I made it my business to watch them both."

"And what were the symptoms you perceived?"

"Why, in the first place, they never exchanged a single word the whole time that the gentleman stayed."

"Which you consider as an infallible symptom?"

"Look ye, Bernard. There were only two causes from which this could proceed on the young man's part. Either he must have been unpardonably rude, and not fit to be received into company, if, when there was but one lady in the room, she should be the only person of whom he took no notice; or else he must have had feelings towards her of so tender a nature, as to render him incapable of addressing her in the mere common strains of politeness, and rather than hazard the betraying these feelings he chose not to address her at all. Now since the young fellow really did not by his general behaviour justify the supposition that the first was the case, I ascribe his silence to the other

cause. Besides, when your roguish son joked him about being in love, the poor boy became as great a tell-tale by his looks as little Kate had been before him."

"Do you really think that love had any concern in the emotions which he undoubtedly felt at that moment? I indeed ascribed them to his being affected at seeing us, as it was our first interview with him since the trial."

"That would not have taken away his voice, or brought tears into his eyes. Much less would it have prevented his ever looking at or speaking to Kate."

"But what makes you suspect Katherine?"

"Why, if you had not been entirely occupied with your new comer, so that she, poor thing, was wholly overlooked, you might have seen that the tea-making did not go on altother as well after he came into the room as before. Not to speak of a delicate rouge that spread itself over her face; for Kate, I must say, is a terrible blusher, she betrays her own secrets sadly, she'll never make a good conspirator:—but besides this, there was a trembling in the hand, so that the tea-pot became on a sudden too heavy for her, and the tea was slopped, and the spoons were rattled, and a cup was emptied into the sugar-bason, so that she was obliged to send out slily for fresh

sugar: in short, the tea-board was from that moment nothing but a scene of disorder. She thought that nobody observed her confusion; but I was too quicksighted for her, and nothing she could now say would put me more in her confidence than her pantomime show while he was in the room did."

"Indeed, Ethelred, you surprise and distress me."

"In good truth, Bernard, I must myself confess that I had rather not have found this object of her affections to be your young son of Vulcan. I was in hopes that the lad might have been your squire's son, and plumed myself somewhat on the idea of paying my devoirs to little Kitty at the hall: indeed, for that matter, I did not think that his address and manners would have disgraced the son of a squire. But, squire or blacksmith, if Kate be not desperately in love with him, and he not a bit less in love with her, I am a mere smatterer in the science. There are three things, they say, that are sad levellers, cards, music, and love. Whether this quality be confined to these three things only, I will not take upon me to determine; for you know, Bernard, that I do not pretend to be any thing like a philosopher. For my part, however, I am disposed to think that whenever any parti-

cular pursuit has taken a strong hold upon the mind, be it what it may, we are very apt to associate with persons addicted to the same, without regarding their rank or situation in life; not at all less in other pursuits, than in a passion for cards or music. As to Love, that he is indeed the arch-leveller of all, there can be no doubt; and my little Kitty, spite of the high blood of the Armstrongs which flows in her veins, is certainly very desperately in love with this scintillation from your blacksmith's forge."

"Come, come, I hope, brother, you are here showing more keen-sightedness than the matter of fact will justify."

"I tell you, I am not; and I would engage in half a dozen words to bring Kate to a full confession."

"And what then?"

"Humph!—that's a home question.—Why then—to be sure—to be sure—I would rather not have seen my heiress the daughter-in-law of a blacksmith;—but—but—the boy has good principles certainly, as witness his conduct with regard to Ned Carberry's will—and—and—you can answer, Bernard, that he has had a good education.—He seems well-behaved too—Humph!—why, what then?—Aye, 'tis that which remains to be considered.—Indeed, I

don't know what then, Bernard; so let us return into the parlour."

"Bernard," said brother Ethelred the next day, "you are a clergyman, and I dare say could quote me a dozen or two of texts of Scripture in a breath, for any purpose which you had a mind to justify, supposing it, I mean, to be a moral and virtuous purpose. I am not a clergyman, so I can better quote old saws, and I have been revolving a good many over in my mind. There is one, which says, that *Virtue is the only true nobility*—another tells us, that *An honest man's the noblest work of God*,—another, that *'Tis manners make the man*,—a fourth, that *A good name is better than much riches*:—why not then better than rank?—what say you, Bernard?"

"I shall certainly not dissent from the truth of any of these propositions."

"Well then, what shall we say?—Sam Danville, you assure me, is as worthy and good a young man, you sincerely believe, as any that exists, and, indeed, his conduct has proved him so. If *Virtue then be the only true nobility*—Hey, Bernard?"

"You think that a noble birth might be dispensed with in Sam Danville?"

"Right, my good brother, and who shall

gainsay me? Again, if *an honest man be the noblest work of God*—what more can a woman desire than to be wedded to the noblest work of her Creator?—Hey, Bernard?"

"I have nothing to say against it."

"And if 'tis true that *manners make the man*, and that *a good name is above wealth or rank*,—again I ask—you see my meaning."

"Whether Sam Danville with the manners of a gentleman...."

"Which you cannot deny him, since they are so much your own forming;—Whether then with such manners and such a character...."

"He is not a fit match for any woman?"

"Aye there's the very thing.—And besides, I might quote another saying—*Marrying and hanging, you know, go by destiny.*"

"Perhaps I may not be so ready to assent to the truth of that."

"I however choose to class it with the others, because it happens to suit my turn; and in the matter of cherishing or rejecting aphorisms of this kind, we commonly cling to those that suit our fancies or our purposes, and reject those that do not. I choose to give this as much weight as the others, because then I can settle matters with myself very easily; for, if your Sam Danville and my Kate Middleton are destined to each other, it would be all in vain

for either you or I, or any body else, to attempt to oppose their union ; marry they must in spite of us all."

"And the responsbility of the thing will then be entirely shifted from your shoulders to that of Destiny."

"Nor will you, I think, deny that he, or she, for I am not quite sure of the animal's sex, is a very convenient scape-goat when we have a mind to do a thing which we are very conscious is not wholly unobjectionable."

"If we can contrive to lull conscience asleep, and persuade her not to give us rather a rough hint now and then of the frauds we are endeavouring to put upon her."

"Pshaw!—you black coats, Bernard, are always for thrusting conscience in every where."

"No, we only wish to recommend her being admitted a welcome guest, to avert her thrusting herself in an unwelcome one."

"And do you think it would be necessary to lull her into a very profound sleep before I might venture upon sanctioning and promoting the union of our Romeo and Juliet?"

"Not very."

"Seriously, Bernard, is it possible that the idea of such a marriage never came into your head?"

"Never, I can assure you. Though I am

now ready to confess, that the probability of their forming a mutual attachment was obvious and great, yet this is the first time that such an idea ever presented itself to my mind. Circumstances have led to their having lived even from children in habits of intimacy with each other; and Samuel has always conducted himself with such perfect propriety, that there never appeared any reason to put a check upon it. While this was the case, I believe that none of their connections on either side ever thought of its leading to more remote consequences."

"I must own, then, that I think their connections were a little short-sighted."

"It may be so. In short, the truth has been, that fully aware ourselves of Samuel's situation, and knowing Katherine to be equally so, it seemed as if there was a distance between them which would be an effectual bar against the idea of an union entering the head of either party."

"You wholly forget what a leveller Love is. Besides, my dear brother, when Kate was in the constant habit of seeing this youth received among all her connections on such a footing of equality as, according to your own account, he has always been, was she very much to be condemned, if no obvious reason appeared, why she alone was to consider him as a being of an inferior order? Let me tell you, besides, I am

seriously of opinion, that if he could have lived in habits of intimacy with Kate, and still retained a perfect indifference to her, I should have thought all the pains taken to give his mind a polish above his situation, very ill bestowed."

"I will not deny the justice of your conclusion. Such an intimacy should certainly not have been permitted, unless my niece's connections had fully made up their minds to abide by the consequences which might naturally be expected. But the truth is, that these things creep on, people can scarcely tell how; and the attachment is formed before any one so much as considers whether there may be a probability of it or not. Such has been the case here. A concurrence of circumstances, which arose gradually out of each other, have led to the present results, almost without its having been possible for any one at the moment to be struck with the idea that they were nearly inevitable. Far be it, however, from me to assert, that my sister never did entertain ideas to this effect; she certainly had a high esteem, I may say a great affection, for Samuel, and she might even think him not unworthy of her daughter."

"Why, since our Nelly, though an Armstrong by birth, was by marriage only a coal-merchant's wife, she had, perhaps, no authority

to be squeamish about her daughter's being in the same situation."

"And you really consider their mutual attachment as a thing that will not admit of a doubt?"

"Most assuredly I do; and I can tell you, Bernard, that I never yet was deceived in such matters. Nay, do but give me your consent, and I'll undertake to bring the girl very soon to confession."

"I know not, brother, that my consent is at all necessary; you are perfect master of your own actions, and Katherine is of an age to choose for herself. She has sense and judgement far beyond her years, at least far beyond what is usually to be found in a female of her age; and if any advances should ever be made to her on Samuel's part, I would be the last person in the world to attempt to influence her determination either the one way or the other. It is a point of so much nicety, that it is difficult to say how far one is authorized to go, even in merely giving advice."

"I am not talking about giving advice, I only proposed to bring her to confession; and, if I am right, she shall be no loser by letting me completely into the secret."

"Allow me, however, to suggest, brother, that I think much delicacy is required in men-

tioning the idea of such an attachment to her, upon the bare ground of suspicion only. I know not how to persuade myself that any thing like an explanation of their sentiments has ever passed between them. If Samuel really loves Katherine, I am very much disposed to believe that he loves in silence; but I think I know him so well, that if I question him upon the subject he will lay open his heart to me: and it seems more delicate to let this be the first step, than to begin by speaking to our niece. I will tell you honestly, that the alliance is one which I never thought of till your suggestions yesterday; and I have since revolved it over very much in my mind. Perhaps it has been wrong to suffer such an intimacy, considering that by the world Katherine will be regarded as having contracted a marriage degrading to herself. As for my own part, I have so high an opinion of the young man, that, as far as relates only to personal considerations, I would rather see her his wife than the wife of any other man. I cannot, however, but wish that the prospects in a worldly point of view were more favourable; poor Samuel's are certainly not at present very flattering. Were there not this objection, I think his honour and integrity so great, and his temper and disposition so admirable, that there are very

few men with whom a woman would have an equal prospect of happiness as a domestic companion."

"Well, Bernard, I leave you to manage the business your own way; all I have to say is this:—It is certain that when first I learnt from what sort of stock this youth, on whom poor Kate has bestowed her heart, was descended, I felt the Armstrong blood begin to make a mighty bustle within me. But I have now lived fifty-eight years in the world, and although I am entirely of opinion, that a match of mere love, unsanctioned by prudence, is a very foolish thing, I equally think, that without great attachment to each other the prospect of happiness is but very indifferent; and I can heartily despise a woman who contracts a marriage with no other view than to the station it will give her in the world. I therefore soon commanded my proud blood to be quiet, and am ready now to say, that since to the man there can be no objection, if he really loves our niece and she loves him, I will put his obscure origin into my pocket, and place him in a situation such as it will be no degradation for her to appear in."

"My generous brother!—he who can thus employ a fortune may truly be said to deserve one! I could almost contemplate yours with envy, from the power it gives you of procuring

yourself such exalted happiness;—for I sincerely believe, that no happiness is so exalted as that which we derive from making others happy. Be assured it shall not be long before you hear further from me on this subject."

This conversation passed immediately after breakfast. In consequence of it a note was dispatched to me by Mr. Armstrong, inviting me in the first place to dinner; and saying, in the second place, that if I was at leisure he would come and sit an hour or two with me, as he had several things to mention, which he wished to talk over free from any danger of interruption, and he therefore preferred coming to me rather than asking me to come to him. To the first part of the note I answered, that I hoped he would excuse my declining the invitation; for, as I purposed staying only a few days, I was desirous of giving up my time as much as possible to my father and mother. To the second I replied, that I should think myself exceedingly honoured and flattered by seeing him as he proposed.

When I told my mother that I expected Mr. Armstrong to call upon me, she was thrown into the utmost perplexity and perturbation, the parlour not being, as she thought, in sufficient order for his reception. She would fain have summoned the maid, and conjointly with

her have set about a grand rout of it, as she thought there might be time enough to make it, between them, a little more decent before he could possibly arrive. This motion, however, I resolutely opposed, not choosing to hazard his arriving while the chairs and tables were dancing a cotillon, when I must be obliged to detain him in the kitchen till order was restored among them. My good mother was, however, so uneasy at the state of the room, that after much argumentation matters were compromised between us by my consenting to her only just laying down the best carpet, which would be done in five minutes, and would make the room somewhat more fit to be seen. This operation was just completed when Mr. Armstrong knocked at the door.

CHAPTER XI.

An effort to revive old connections, with its success.—A great shock given by an idea suggested; and a reputed child absolved from all filial duty.—Effects produced by a proposed union.

For the first time in my life I felt uneasy at the thoughts of seeing Mr. Armstrong; and though when I assured him that I thought myself honoured and flattered by his intended visit, I said no more than I strictly felt, yet mingled with that feeling were strange apprehensions concerning the subject of his visit. Conscious of my behaviour the day before, I was afraid lest some suspicion of the truth might have been awakened in his mind, and that he might wish to give me such mild reproofs as alone he was capable of giving, yet which from their very mildness I should only have felt the more deeply. I had not slept particularly well the night before—the state of my mind was not very propitious to repose—and this, united with the thoughts of what seemed a probable cause of Mr. Armstrong's visit, certainly did not improve my looks, or make them appear to more advantage than the day before.

I saw my visitor contemplate me earnestly when he came in, with an expression of much

concern on his countenance; he, however, kindly spared me the pain of noticing my altered appearance, and began by saying that there were a great variety of subjects on which he wanted to talk with me,—so many that he scarcely knew where to begin. "As we are, however, Samuel," he continued, "generally disposed to consider our own concerns as of the principal importance, I shall, I think, begin with myself. I have always understood by your letters, that from the time of my poor Walter's unfortunate affair, till your leaving London, you were in the habit of calling occasionally on Mrs. Northington?"

"It is very true, sir."

"You never mentioned, however, having met there more than once with a former friend of mine, her uncle, Mr. Anderson?"

"Indeed, sir, I did not; and for these reasons. I remembered, that when you were pleased to honour me with your confidence so far as to mention the circumstances of your attachment to Mrs. Northington, you said that this affair had been the occasion of your losing the friendship of a gentleman for whom you had a great regard, and to whom you were under considerable obligations. From the conversations I had with Mr. Anderson I felt assured that he must be the person to whom you

alluded, and I thought that the mention of him might possibly recall painful recollections to your mind;—that it was, therefore, better avoided."

"I thank you, my dear Samuel, for this kind consideration. You were right in your conjectures as to his being the person alluded to, and I have now to thank you for some services you rendered me with him. The nature of them you will best understand by perusing this letter, which I received from him some months ago. I should not have suffered the matter to remain so long unnoticed, but that I felt myself compelled to abstain from any communication with you till after the late trial. Now, however, I should be inexcusable in not acknowledging the obligation I owe you." So saying, he put a letter into my hand, which I opened, and read as follows:

'My dear Bernard,

'After a lapse of more than twenty years, in which there has been a total cessation of all intercourse between us, it is with feelings of mingled satisfaction and self-reproach that I take up the pen to address you once more;—to pour out my heart to you in that confidential style from which I sincerely regret the having ever departed. To relate at large all that I have to say upon the subject, is the only ex-

cuse that I can offer for my conduct; after which I shall refer it to your own candid and honourable mind to determine, whether, if events have proved that I drew erroneous conclusions, I yet had not sufficient ground for supposing myself perfectly justified in them; —for conceiving that I was only showing a proper indignation against that kind of duplicity and disingenuousness of conduct, which, if the circumstances had been really such as I presumed, would certainly have been deserving of some censure.

'I must even carry you back, Bernard, to the summer when I invited you, then a fellow-collegiate, and having recently taken a very honourable degree, to spend the long vacation with me at my mother's house at Ludlow. My niece, Anastasia Westbourne, was at that time in the bloom of youth and beauty, the object of universal admiration; and it soon appeared evident to me, that you did not see her with eyes of indifference.—I thought it at the same time equally obvious, that of all her numerous admirers, none had obtained such a distinguished place in her favour as yourself. I loved you both, and contemplated this growing attachment with pleasure. More splendid matches I thought were very likely to offer themselves for my niece; but the qualitie

of the mind and heart, on which wedded happiness must principally depend, I thought could no where be found more eminent than in Bernard Armstrong. I felt, therefore, a very sincere wish to see you placed in a situation where prudence would sanction an union likely to prove a source of so much happiness to both.

'The subsequent death of your father, and the honourable fetters you imposed upon yourself in taking your deserted sisters under your protection, I saw raised formidable obstacles to the accomplishment of my wishes. Still, however, I entertained no doubt of the connection being as decidedly the wish of yourself and my niece, as it was my own. My desire, therefore, was, in order to give it every possible encouragement, to have placed you in a situation near us; and with this view I actually inquired about a curacy for you in the neighbourhood of Ludlow. Unfortunately, however, it had no house upon it, so that it could not answer your purpose; and Mr. Worledge's offering itself at the same moment, that appeared so perfectly suited to you, that I could not have excused myself if I had not placed you there. Yet I must acknowledge that I regretted its distance from Ludlow, since I thought there was some danger lest such a

total separation might prove the occasion of your old partialities being forgotten, and of new ones being formed.

'Let it be understood, however, that before my going abroad, nothing direct had ever passed between Anastasia and myself, with regard to the attachment which I considered as reciprocal between you and her. But where such an one does exist, I believe it to be very difficult for the parties not to betray their sentiments frequently in a variety of ways, of which they are scarcely themselves aware.

(This observation touched me so nearly, that I could not read it unmoved; I felt the colour rush into my face, and while my eyes were fixed on the paper, I could not see distinctly a single character inscribed upon it.— "How!" I exclaimed within myself, "cannot such a passion be concealed?—Good God! is it possible then that I may ever have betrayed myself?—Heaven forbid!"—and a trembling seized my hand, so that I could scarcely hold the letter; some minutes even elapsed before I could recover myself so as to proceed in reading it, while I did not dare to turn my eyes towards Mr. Armstrong, lest I should perceive that he was looking at me. At length, however, I proceeded in the perusal, and read:)

'It was from these indications alone that my

inferences were drawn, but I was perfectly satisfied that they were accurate. I sometimes joked with my niece about her favourite Bernard Armstrong, on purpose to sound her; and the manner in which my jokes were received, carried every time a stronger conviction to my mind how much her heart was devoted to you.

'At my return to England, after an absence of seven years, no alteration had taken place in my wishes upon this subject, and I thought the prospect of their being accomplished very flattering. I knew from the letters I had received during my stay abroad, that Anastasia had refused more than one extremely advantageous offer, and particularly that she had repeatedly refused Mr. Northington, which in point of fortune and situation was certainly a great match for her. These things were to me grateful proofs that her affections were unchanged. With regard to yourself, I was pretty well assured, from the general tenor of several letters Mr. Worledge received from Mr. Conway while we were abroad, that you would be my cousin's successor at Langham; and I did, indeed, set out to accompany his funeral thither, fully impressed with the pleasing hope that I should soon see my darling niece established there as the wife of my cherished young friend.

'You will judge then, my dear Bernard, how severe must have been my disappointment, when, on coming to Langham, I found it a generally received opinion in the neighbourhood, that an engagement absolutely subsisted between you and Miss Middleton, and that you had been for some time instructing her, and forming her mind, to make her such a companion as you would wish. I was at first very much disposed not to give any credit to so unwelcome a report; yet the terms of intimacy on which I myself saw her received at your house, seemed so full and ample a confirmation of its truth, that I knew not in the end how to withhold my belief; it seemed pertinaciously rejecting what carried conviction upon its very face. I own, therefore, that I quitted Langham under an impression of severe disappointment and mortification; and these were the more deeply felt, in proportion to the flattering hopes which they superseded.

'Perhaps I was wrong,—indeed, I am disposed to pronounce that I certainly was wrong, in not speaking to you fairly and openly upon the subject. Had I done so, all would have been explained, and the unfortunate consequences which have arisen from the want of being more explicit, might have been averted. But the moment of disappointment is seldom that of cool reason, and my resentment at the

slight, for as such I could not help considering it, put upon my niece, was too much awakened for any other feeling to be admitted. Under these impressions, I took an opportunity, very soon after my return to Ludlow, of observing to Anastasia, as if only in a casual way, that Bernard Armstrong seemed to have a wife ready prepared to share his living with him. The emotion with which she received the intelligence, convinced me more fully than ever that I was not mistaken in her sentiments, and I own I thought her in every respect a woman so superior to Miss Middleton, that my irritation, at the latter being preferred to her, was exceedingly aggravated.

'It was then that I first began to feel any favourable dispositions towards Mr. Northington. I had not liked him, from the acquaintance I had with him before I went abroad; but his persevering attachment to my niece, and I am afraid a strong pique against you, made me now regard him with other eyes, and think that there was more reason in a woman's bestowing herself upon a man who seemed so highly to feel her value, than in reserving herself for one by whom she was wholly neglected.

'The first time that I ever talked with her on this subject, was also the first that any thing direct with regard to you ever passed between

us. Her brother, in lamenting to me her repeated refusals of Mr. Northington, said, that all her friends were convinced it was owing to a secret attachment to Bernard Armstrong, and had even hinted as much to her ; but all the answer they could obtain was, that her dislike of Mr. Northington was a very sufficient reason for refusing him, without her having any other attachment. Mr. Westbourne said, however, that no one had so much influence with her as myself, and she was more likely to attend to one word from me than to the united persuasions of all her other friends : they therefore rested in the hope that this influence might be exerted to make her see the folly of rejecting a situation so advantageous, on the vague hope of being united to a man who it was far from certain had any attachment to her.

" It is possible, it is indeed probable, that I might never have mentioned to her in direct terms my ideas respecting her attachment to you, had I not found, from what was here said by her brother, that it had by her other relations been made in some sort a subject of contention with her. I then thought it better to talk over the matter with her seriously and calmly, and I took an early opportunity of doing so. She freely acknowledged, that from the first of her acquaintance with you she had regarded you

with a very decided partiality, and it was a sentiment now so fixed in her mind, that she did not believe it possible to be changed by any lapse of time or alteration of circumstances. I unfolded to her in very plain terms what had been my wishes; but I said it was with concern I must add, that I now saw every reason to think your affections placed elsewhere. I told her of the reports I had heard in the neighbourhood of Langham, and of the reasons which I thought, from my own observations, there were to give credit to them, earnestly recommending her therefore to combat an attachment which must thenceforward be considered as lavished upon one who had no sentiments responsive to hers.

'From this time you became the very frequent subject of our conversations; but no arguments could for a long time induce her to relinquish the idea that you were really attached to her, and only waited to declare yourself till circumstances were more favourable. I always combated her ideas, but she still adhered to them; nor were they abandoned till a lapse of three years after you had been in possession of your living without any advance being made on your part, seemed to leave her no further ground for hope;—seemed incontrovertibly to establish the sad truth, that if you

ever had entertained a partiality for her, it was now entirely at an end. Then alone could she be prevailed upon to listen to the persuasions of her friends, who all pleaded strongly in Mr. Northington's favour; yet, even then, it was evident that she was far from feeling any thing like affection for him. Hopeless, however, at last, of ever having it in her power to follow her inclinations, and worn out with incessant importunities, she lost all power of resistance, and yielded to become Mr. Northington's wife. How much reason she, as well as all her connections, have had to regret that she did yield, there is no occasion now to dwell upon; these things are as well, shall I not say as *fatally*, known to you as to ourselves.

'Yet that such sources of regret did subsist, was to me rather an aggravation than a diminution of my resentment against you, since I could not help considering you as the remote cause of them all: it was undoubtedly in your power, and in yours alone, to have prevented the evil. Your subsequent marriage with Miss Middleton seemed a sufficient confirmation of her having been actually preferred to my niece, and carried the alienation of my heart from you to its acmé; I could even for some years scarcely hear your name mentioned with any patience. It was not so with Anastasia; she, on

the contrary, whenever your conduct was made the subject of censure by her family in her hearing, always stood forward in its vindication. A thousand times has she urged, what no one could deny to be the truth, that as you never in any way professed an attachment to her, no one was authorised to arraign you as having deserted her; we might consider it as matter of regret that another had been preferred to her, but it never could fairly be made a subject of censure upon you.

'Shall I add one thing more?—Yes, my friend, I will,—I am now upon my confession, and will not shrink from acknowledging every thing in which I think I have acted injuriously towards you. I will own that, influenced by the prejudices I had conceived against you on this ground, I have been perhaps much too ready to listen to the voice of scandal on another, and give credit to a story which formerly I should have despised as a slander, contradicted at once by every circumstance in your character and conduct. You shall now, however, at least, by knowing what has been said to your discredit, have an opportunity of vindicating yourself. There is a young man whom you have eminently taken under your protection, in whose education you have had a very principal share. In all this you were pro-

bably actuated by pure benevolence alone: but it has been converted into a subject of detraction; you have been reputed to be only performing duties which your relative situation towards the youth imperiously demanded; he has been said to have the claims of a son upon you.'

(I was like one suddenly paralysed by an electric shock as I perused this part of the letter; I cannot describe the sensation with which I was inspired, it dropped from my hands, my head was seized with a giddiness as if ready to fall into a fit, and my eyes were turned upon Mr. Armstrong with a vacant stare.

"My dear Samuel," he said, "do not, I conjure you, suffer this matter to agitate you so cruelly!—Heaven knows that it is a most gross and unfounded slander. Believe me, and I may safely appeal to Heaven for the truth of my assertion, that in what I have done for you I never was actuated by any other motive than a disposition to promote the honest desire of two worthy and industrious persons to settle an only child advantageously in life. I have been myself exceedingly hurt at hearing that such a report was in circulation; it could originate only in malice, and was one on which I certainly never calculated when I took upon myself to be your instructor. I sincerely hope

that it has never reached your father and mother; it should not have been imparted to you but in the apprehension lest it might on some occasion be either accidentally or officiously intruded upon you in a more painful manner, when it could not be immediately contradicted."

"Indeed," I replied, "I acknowledge my obligation most sincerely, sir, that you have chosen yourself to mention the report, since I know not what might been the effect upon me if I had ever heard it in a more casual way; and there are always too many officious people in the world ready to communicate reports of the kind, without thinking of the wounds they may be inflicting. How cruel is it that kindness, such as you have shown me, should be converted into a subject of most detestable calumny!"

"Do not be uneasy on this account; I trust that those who know me well could never give the report a moment's credit; and as to the common babble of an idle gossiping world, it is little worth a wise man's regarding. Mr. Anderson himself would never have given it any attention, had not his mind been previously warped by prejudices which made him glad to seize upon any thing that bore the appearance of justifying them. Perhaps, if he

would thoroughly have searched his heart, he would have found that the belief he professed was much more assumed than real: you will, indeed, as you proceed, find him nearly confessing as much. Let us now then, my dear Samuel, drop the subject, nor ever again renew it. I wished to give you the assurance I have done, as it might hereafter be of importance to you; but that done, I would gladly forget that there ever were people capable of raising and circulating so odious a falsehood."

A few words more passed; when I, having somewhat resumed my suspended faculties, proceeded in the perusal of Mr. Anderson's letter. He continued :—)

'I will own, Bernard, to my shame, that I have been too ready to believe this report; I ask your forgiveness for it, and require only your assurance to be satisfied that it is wholly unfounded. I have perhaps been the rather led to allude to it, because it has been from some conversations with this very young man, that my eyes first began to be opened towards you, that I began to contemplate your conduct towards my niece under a softened point of view. It is through him I learn that your attachment to her was sincere, and that you were on the point of avowing it when you learnt that her hand was otherwise disposed of; that

it was only because all hopes of obtaining her were at an end, that you consented from compassion to unite yourself to Miss Middleton. All this has certainly changed the aspect of things to my mind; yet, my dear Bernard, excuse me if in one thing I must still condemn you. Why was such very close secrecy observed?—would it not have been far better to have avowed your sentiments?—My Anastasia was a reasonable being, I had shown myself your warm friend, and such an arrangement might have been made as should not have interfered with the more than fraternal kindness you were showing to your sisters. That you acted thus from motives of the purest delicacy, I will readily believe,—but was it not false delicacy?—and is not the real happiness of mankind too often sacrificed at that shrine?—Among fair and candid minds, and these are the only minds worth troubling ourselves to conciliate, frankness and sincerity will surely be found much rather the support than the destruction of those true good-manners, which never ought to be departed from even among persons upon the most intimate footing.

'All I can add further is, that since I have never been without deep regrets at the disappointment I experienced from the cessation of our friendship, even when I thought most

that there was a sufficient cause for it, so nothing can now give me greater pleasure than its renewal. Tell me then that you are ready to receive me as a friend, (as a repentant one shall I say, yet as a friend?) and believe me I shall with eagerness embrace the first opportunity in my power to take you by the hand most cordially in the rectory at Langham. In the mean time be assured that I am at this moment with no less sincerity than at a former period of my life,

Most faithfully yours,

'WILLIAM ANDERSON.'

"And what say you now?" said Mr. Armstrong, as I finished reading. "Shall I not own an obligation to you, Samuel, for having paved the way to a reconciliation which I can assure you gives me the most heartfelt pleasure?"

I replied, that nothing could afford me greater satisfaction than the idea that it had been in my power to render him justice, which was truly all I had done, perceiving, as I did very plainly, that the whole matter originated in misconception on the part of Mr. Anderson. "And have you seen him, sir?" I concluded with asking.

"Not yet: many circumstances have combined to put off our meeting from time to time. He would have been here at this moment, but I was obliged once more to postpone his visit, on

account of my brother Ethelred's coming unexpectedly. My house is therefore now too full to receive him; but the first moment that I have a bed again at liberty, I shall hope that he will occupy it. And now, my dear Samuel, having done with this subject, there is another on which I must begin. I think we must both have seen pretty clearly what unfortunate effects may be produced among friends from the want of frankness and open communication, and we must therefore be sufficiently convinced how desireable it is to avoid splitting a second time upon so fatal a rock."

I know not what it was that here threw me into the most violent agitation. Certainly I had not the least expectation of what was to follow, yet I seemed to have a presentiment of something, though I could not tell what. I wished to make some reply; but my ideas were so confused that I could not connect them so as to speak with any thing like consistency, and I remained wholly mute, while Mr. Armstrong proceeded.

"It is plain from my friend's narrative, that while I thought my partiality to his niece a secret to every body but her and myself, his observations had given him as accurate an insight into it as if I had made him my confident by oral confession. It seems, therefore, as he justly remarks, that it is not so easy to disguise similar

attachments by assumed indifference, as people are often disposed to flatter themselves."

I had hitherto looked him in the face, but conscience now flew so forcibly into mine that it was impossible for me to do so any longer. It was not now a blush, it was a mortal paleness which came over me, with a sickness at heart that half deprived me of my senses; and turning round upon my chair, I rested my elbow upon the back, while with my hand I endeavoured to support my head.

"Samuel," he continued, "I too have a niece—"

"O for Heaven's sake forbear, sir!" I cried in the extremest agony, "indeed I cannot hear more."

"Then it is true," he said, coming up to me and taking my hand with an expression of kindness which I can never forget,—"it is indeed then true, and my brother is right? But be composed, Samuel!—I do not ask to pry inquisitively into the secrets of your heart, but I wish your happiness sincerely;—I have ever done, and I hope ever shall do, every thing reasonable within my power to promote it."

"O forgive me, sir," I exclaimed, "Heaven knows that it was my fixed purpose to carry this secret to my grave, if it had not been thus unawares drawn from me."

"The fact then is so?—you do indeed love Katherine?"

"Forgive me, Mr. Armstrong!—You have been too much my friend, I owe you too many obligations to attempt to deny in words what it appears I have in vain endeavoured to conceal. But believe me when I solemnly assure you, that far from having ever entertained a thought of avowing my sentiments, my resolution was decidedly taken, since I found it impossible to conquer my passion, never, unless driven to it by the most imperious necessity, to see Miss Middleton again. I have for more than five years maintained a struggle which I know not how to maintain any longer, my only hope of repose is in fleeing her altogether. It is this motive, if I must own all my weakness, which more than any other led me back again to college, since there, removed from her and devoted to study, I hoped that in time I might think of her no more, or at least learn to think of her with a quiet and composed mind."

"Samuel, your resolution was laudable, was honourable. You conceived that this attachment never could be sanctioned with the approbation of my niece's connections, and you therefore determined to fly temptation. But if you should hear that you are acting under an error, —if you should be told that they as well as my

niece herself know how to appreciate the best qualities of the heart and mind, though the possessor was not born in a station equal to themselves, and can pass over the one when more than compensated by the other, would not the case be altered?—Might it not then be possible to find you some situation in which composure of mind might be obtained, equal, if not superior, to what you promised yourself in the seclusion of a college?"

"From any other than Mr. Armstrong I should be afraid that words so flattering were only intended to prove me, and ascertain to what lengths I was capable of carrying my presumption, with a view to chastising it as it deserves. But you, sir, I am well assured, are incapable of mixing censure, however well-founded you may esteem it, with insult, and I am therefore bound to consider all you have said as intended to be understood literally. Yet I must observe, that though your own candid and generous mind might lead you to overlook the difference between my situation and that of Miss Middleton, the same cannot be expected of those whom similar circumstances have never led to take an equal interest in my behalf:—to them this must appear an union too incongruous to be for one moment thought of. Or supposing this otherwise, could I justify to my-

self the idea that I had placed a woman whom I adore,—a woman worthy of the highest honours and distinctions, if they were to be the reward of merit alone,—in a situation where every one must consider her as exceedingly degraded? O no! this is an idea which I can never support!—Only let me then entreat, sir, that the subject may never be mentioned again! I shall never forget the kind expressions you have used towards me on this as on a thousand other occasions; 'tis on them alone I rest my hopes, that what has now passed between us may not be remembered to my disadvantage; that I may be permitted to shelter myself under the cloak of secrecy, from the obloquy that must be attached to a discovery of my presumption, and to pursue without interruption the path which duty points out to me."

"Far be it from me, Samuel, ever to think of urging you to pursue any other; but perhaps one may be found less thorny than what you had chalked out to yourself, and which may be followed with equal propriety. If such an one should be offered to your choice, I trust that you will not let mistaken notions of honour bind you irrevocably to your own plans, or impel you foolishly to sacrifice to them both your happiness and that of others. Let us, however, for the present adjourn the subject.

—Give me your hand,—think well on what I have said.—I am satisfied now as to the main point, that you sincerely love my niece,—all else must be guided by circumstances as they arise.—Farewell! I do not ask you to come to my house; I know that in the present state of your mind that cannot be thought of, but it will not be long before you see me again."

He now rose up to depart, when all that had passed the evening before, between Walter and myself, rushed forcibly into my mind, and I could see no other object than him made wretched by the circumstances whence my happiness was to be derived. This was an idea altogether insupportable to me, and I exclaimed, "Yet stay, sir, for Heaven's sake!—O Mr. Armstrong, you know not what you are saying—what you are doing!"

"Samuel, what can you mean?" he said, while his countenance was expressive of the deepest astonishment,—"what can your words imply?"

"Pardon me, sir, I scarcely know what I say;—but do not, for Heaven's sake, add to my guilt in having dared to love your niece, by making me at the same time a traitor to friendship."

"How!—a traitor to friendship! Explain

yourself instantly, I conjure you!—Can it be that your friend—"

"Yes, it is even so—Walter—"

"Loves my niece?"

"Too true."

"Samuel, I am grieved beyond expression at what you say. Has he then told you so? and does she favour his addresses?"

"Pardon me, sir,—it was indeed a communication made to me in confidence; yet, after what has passed, I could hardly have stood acquitted to myself in not imparting it to you."

"Indeed I thank you for the communication, though I deeply regret the circumstance. Few things would occasion me more heartfelt concern than to see a friendship of so many years buried in the grave of rivalship."

"That it shall never be!—Pardon my speaking thus, sir!—My friend's attachment is not returned by the object of it; nor does she give him any hopes that her sentiments ever can be changed."

"He has then disclosed his attachment to her?"

"He has; and his suit met with a decided refusal. I scarcely, perhaps, ought to presume it possible, that Miss Middleton can have considered me with more favourable eyes than her amiable cousin; but even if this should be the case, never—Oh! I know not what I would say."

"Samuel, I understand your feelings perfectly. —Compose your mind, I conjure you, and rely upon my unabated affection. I think I know Walter's heart; I will talk to him, and dare answer that he would of all things deprecate being made an obstacle to your happiness. Yet answer me one more question: Does he know of your attachment?"

"O no! at least I never uttered a syllable upon the subject to any one, and I have good reason to think that he has no suspicion of it."

"That I am glad to hear; he will the more readily listen to me when I talk the matter over with him. We have all, it seems, been unaccountably blind. Those who had been in the habit of seeing you and Katherine together for years had no suspicion of any attachment between you, while a stranger but just come amongst us detected it immediately. It is to my brother we owe the discovery."

"Ought I to bless him for it, or not?"

"I hope you will find in the end that he deserves your blessing. But again, Samuel, farewell:—it is better, for the present, that we break off this conversation. Let me repeat my exhortations to you to compose yourself, and depend upon my word that you shall not be kept long in suspense."

CHAPTER XII.

A chapter of conferences, with an unbounded display of generosity on all sides, sufficient to have ennobled many a chapter.

IT is impossible to describe the emotions with which I was agitated when left by Mr. Armstrong's departure entirely to my own reflections. One moment all that had passed appeared to me as a dream, and I endeavoured to rouse and awaken myself; yet still the same images were before me,—the same sounds still vibrated in my ears. "Is it possible?" I said within myself. "Mr. Armstrong not only did not appear offended at the attachment he compelled me to own for his niece, he even, as it were, reproved me when I assured him that I never had admitted, nor ever would admit, a thought of her becoming my wife. Would he then have me entertain hopes that she may be so?—It cannot be!—I am conscious that I hardly knew what he said, and I must have mistaken his meaning. What! Katherine Middleton, the daughter of Eleanor Armstrong, the niece of so many other Armstrongs, become the wife of a blacksmith's son? No. Mr. Armstrong himself must have been dreaming, if he really gave me encouragement to think

of such a thing;—but that he could not do, I must rather myself have been dreaming when I fancied it. This uncle, too, who has professed his intention of adopting her as his daughter, and giving her a fortune beyond what her father-in-law's generosity would have bestowed upon her,—would he ever endure the thoughts of such a connection?—Impossible!—the idea is altogether absurd!—away with it! Yet, on the other hand, Mr. Armstrong is not a man to sport with the feelings of any one;—he surely, therefore, never would have said so much if he had not been confident of its being confirmed by his brother." In short, the idea that I ever should be the husband of Katherine seemed happiness so great, that it was impossible to flatter myself it could be reserved for me, and I resolved not to think more of what had passed; to consider the encouragement I had received, even though given by Mr. Armstrong, as words without meaning.

Then again the idea of Walter obtruded itself upon me. He had expressed satisfaction in the reflection, that, if refused himself, he was not likely to experience the added mortification of seeing the object he loved in the possession of another. No! even though Katherine herself should consent to make me happy, and her uncles should not oppose the union, how could

I bear to inflict such a wound upon a friend who ever had been, and was still, dearer to me than myself? Rather, if I had any influence with the beloved object, it ought to be exerted in endeavouring to persuade her to bestow herself upon him.

These different objects and ideas presented themselves to my mind under every possible form that they could assume, nor could any others find admission. I turned and twisted myself on my seat in a thousand different directions; still they were every where before me. I went out and walked several turns up and down the garden, but I equally found them there. I returned again into the house, I threw myself again upon a chair,—it was every where the same. I had not, however, reseated myself five minutes, when whom should I see enter but Walter himself! He came in half breathless with haste, and, shaking me by the hand more eagerly than ever, "Samuel, my friend, my cousin," he exclaimed,—"yet I could almost resolve not to call you friend any more, after the serious cause of complaint that I have against you,—after the violation of friendship of which you had nearly made me guilty!"

"O Walter!"

"Hear me, Sam.—I have perhaps, like the rest of my family, been too egregiously blind

to what might very naturally be expected by all, and what a thousand things which now press upon my recollection might have rendered visible to all. Yes, Sam, it was an unaccountable infatuation in any set of people to suppose, that such an intimacy as has been encouraged between two persons so worthy of each other, so suited by habits and dispositions to each other, as Katherine and yourself, could subsist for a length of time without its leading to the attachment which you have so recently confessed. I will go further; I will even say that it was cruel to both, to have thrown you so much in each other's way, if, in case of such an attachment being avowed, it was to meet with opposition. These sentiments, believe me, come from the very bottom of my soul; and I rejoice to find that my father, in whose mind judgement, candour and justice ever go hand in hand, sees the matter in exactly the same light. Yet I have one cause of complaint against you:—why has this passion been concealed from me? Honour, you will tell me, demanded the concealment: it may be so: but had not friendship, such as I have uniformly shown you, its claims? Indeed, Sam, if I had ever entertained the remotest idea of your sentiments towards Katherine, I would have opposed a determined resistance to any rising inclination for her which I ever perceived

in my own breast;—I would have done more, and made every exertion in my power to induce her herself, and every one connected with her, to think of nothing in this union but your personal merits, and to confer upon them their just reward."

"Generous, generous Walter!"

"Samuel, when I yesterday unfolded to you my own ill-success in the proposals I had made to Katherine, I naturally expressed a satisfaction, that I was not likely to behold her in the possession of another. How little did I then suspect that I was in a few hours after to hear the disclosure which my father has just been making to me, and learn that in what had passed I was inflicting the most cruel tortures upon you! Indeed I can scarcely express how much I was shocked in reflecting upon my own short-sightedness, that I had never suspected the truth, or how much I was affected at the description given by my father of the conflict he had witnessed in your breast when you thought that I must be rendered miserable by what alone could make you completely happy. No, Sam, believe me, I am not that selfish being!—The observation I made escaped me carelessly, escaped me without the least idea that I was talking to a rival. But be satisfied, my excellent friend, of my speaking with the

utmost sincerity, when I solemnly assure you, that the knowledge of your sentiments has effected a total change in mine;—that far from recoiling at the prospect of seeing you and Katherine blessed in the possession of each other, I shall exult in the idea that my own pretensions were yielded to yours; that I shall see two people for whom I have so unbounded a regard, as happy as they deserve."

"Noble-minded friend!"

"Give me then, Sam, your solemn promise, that no considerations which concern me shall again be brought forward as obstacles to your happiness; my own, believe me, can never be so effectually promoted, as in witnessing yours and Katherine's."

"Walter, how can I ever find terms adequate to acknowledging such generosity?"

"Now, tell me, Sam, is this passion of long standing?"

"It is indeed."

"Yes, I can trace back a thousand circumstances which might have revealed it to me. Was not this the cause of your unaccountable secession for awhile from visiting in Chatham Place, just after I first came to Town?"

"Indeed you are right. I thought then that I perceived in you a growing passion for Katherine, and it was this which first revealed to me

the grand secret of my own heart. I was not aware till then how much I loved her, and was shocked beyond measure at my own presumption, when made sensible of it:—words are wholly inadequate to describe what I have since suffered in endeavouring to combat and conceal this passion."

"Ah, Sam! it was unkind not to make me your confident at that time;—not to give me such an opportunity of proving the sincerity of that friendship which I have always professed for you."

"O no, Walter, do not call it unkind!—Think of my situation, think how deeply my honour was concerned to conceal and control my sentiments, and you will surely not condemn me for retaining within my own bosom a secret which it would have been criminal to confide even to you."

"Well, you were perhaps right; I can only rejoice now in Katherine's rejection of my proposals, as much as I lamented it at the moment. I shall still love her tenderly as a cousin; shall love her even more as the wife of my friend; and shall have no other cause of regret, but that I was not the principal instrument in making her so."

"Yet, even now, I scarcely know how to

flatter myself that such happiness can be in store for me."

"Why doubt it?—My father assured me that he should rejoice in the union, and that the steps he had taken were with the full concurrence of my uncle Ethelred; that they were even principally at his instigation."

"But there is another person."

"Katherine herself."

"Even so.—I scarcely dare flatter myself—"

"I have no doubts upon the subject.—I can recall a thousand circumstances, which assure me that she, no less than yourself, has been maintaining a painful combat against her inclinations; perhaps hesitating whether she might believe them returned, certainly scarcely allowing herself to hope that they could ever be sanctioned by the approbation of her friends. But we will say no more till we know the result of a conference, to which my father, on my quitting him, said that he was going to invite her."

This interview with Walter certainly somewhat relieved my mind, but notwithstanding I passed the remainder of the day in a state of the most cruel suspense and agitation. At some moments I was still scarcely able to persuade myself of the reality of all that had pass-

ed; at others I felt persuaded, that though not mistaken as to what had actually taken place, I was wrong in permitting myself to found aspiring hopes upon it; for that, when the question came to be more closely argued, it was not possible for either uncle really to think of bestowing his niece upon me. If so, I endeavoured to persuade myself that this would be decisive of my fate; for that, even if Katherine should be disposed to give me her hand without their consent, I would not accept it. Whether, if such a temptation had been thrown in my way, I should have had power to adhere to so terrible a resolution, there is no occasion to investigate too closely, since my fortitude was happily not put to so severe a trial.

Mr. Armstrong, on returning to his own house after he had been with me, met uncle Ethelred walking about the garden, lying in wait for him. "Bernard," said he, "you must forgive me, but I could not restrain myself, and I thought that as you had taken one of our babes in hand, I might as well set about sifting the other. I have therefore, partly by joking Kate about her partialities, partly by taxing her with them in downright terms, made her confess that she has a very high opinion of Mr. Danville, and that she thinks he would make

an excellent husband; and that she thought his conduct very noble about Mr. Carberry's will; and that she thinks him a remarkably fine temper, and a very cheerful, pleasant companion. She thinks, besides, that if it were not for his being born in such a humble station of life, any woman might very readily attach herself to him: in fact, she can see no other objection to him but his birth, since he has perfectly the manners of a gentleman, and has had the education of one. In short, she thinks so many of these pretty things with regard to him, that I am very sure, spite of his birth, she would rather have him than any high-bred noble in the land. And now, Bernard, what says your swain?"

"In good truth, brother, you are no less right with regard to him. I shall give you credit in future for a very acute discernment in these matters, since I can assure you that I never had the least suspicion of the kind with regard to either. It is true that I never saw them together till yesterday, when Samuel came in during tea: so whether, upon seeing more of their behaviour to each other, I might have made any discoveries, I cannot pretend to determine. Though, indeed, Samuel did not intend to afford me any further opportunities for discovery; he was so desperately in love

with Katherine, that he had resolved never to see her more."

"A mighty odd mode, however, of showing his love to the girl!"

"There is the very thing. He found himself so much in danger of showing his love if he did see her, and had determined so decidedly for himself that it would not be honourable to think of showing it, that he found no safety but in flight, and on flight he had resolved."

"Well, and certainly I think he was right enough there; for, after all, there is such a difference in their situations, that he really had no business to aspire to Kate's hand, without receiving some previous encouragement. It shows, however, that he has such notions of honour as really belong to a gentleman, and he shall not be a loser by it. I say, Bernard, you mentioned one day his father's wanting very much to make a parson of him. For my part, I don't see what objection you, or I, or any body can make to that; it seems to me as proper a thing as he can do. Then I can buy him a living, and he'll be as good a gentleman as nine out of ten that are born so, and I hope Kate will not have much reason to be ashamed of him. How soon can he be made a parson?"

"O, he may be ordained any day that he

pleases, and in a few months he will be able to take a living."

"Tell him, then, to get himself made one as fast as he can, and I'll take care about providing for him. But as I don't much understand things of this kind myself,—Bernard, you must look about, and, when you find a living that will suit, let me know, and I'll give you the money to pay for it."

"You are truly kind and generous, brother; but I can safely say, that I believe your generosity could hardly be extended to a more meritorious object."

"And if he does but make my Kate as good a husband as she deserves, I shall think, indeed, that the money never could be better bestowed."

Without having any doubts as to the accuracy of his brother's statement, at least with respect to the leading feature of it, Katherine's flattering partiality to me, uncle Bernard yet wished to hear from her own mouth the true state of the case. He thought it better, however, first to investigate the extent of Walter's partiality for his cousin, and with that view held a conference with him, which occasioned my afterwards receiving the visit from Walter above related. Satisfied from it, that he would present no obstacle to the affair being pursued,

the next object was, to come to an explanation with Katherine; and taking an opportunity in the course of the day to intimate that he wished for some private conversation with her, he began by saying:—"My dear niece, your uncle Ethelred has, I believe, been putting some questions to you this morning, of a nature which you perhaps little expected. Far be from me the idea of intruding impertinently into your secret thoughts and inclinations, yet I own that this is a subject which interests me so deeply, that I know not how to forbear mentioning it, anxious to have from yourself the confirmation or confutation of what I have just been hearing from him. Your happiness is so dear to me—shall I not say the same also of the happiness of another person whom this question essentially concerns?—yes, I will say, that the happiness of both is so dear to me, that I earnestly wish not to take any step in an affair of so much delicacy, without the fullest assurance that I am answering by it the end I have in view."

"Indeed, uncle, I will own that my uncle Ethelred has been putting a number of questions to me this morning, which have distressed me very much."

"Far be from me, Katherine, any idea of distressing you! I know that the subject is a de-

licate one to name to a young woman; yet I would fain hope that with me you may be able to throw off all reserve. It is no just matter of reflection upon the most refined feelings, that they have not been insensible to the merits of a deserving object; I have always been disposed to think with a noble poet of our own country that

Not loving first, but loving wrong,'s the shame.

In the present instance I am the rather induced to speak, because there are circumstances of a peculiar nature, in the relative situations of yourself and the person to whom I allude, which must oppose themselves to your happiness, if it be as I suppose in any way dependent upon him, unless they can be removed by the interposition of those who are friends alike to both parties: it is the great affection I feel for both, which has led me to think of taking upon myself the office of mediator between them."

"My dear uncle, you alarm me."

"There is no reason to be alarmed, my love. I was only going to tell you that I have just now seen, and had a great deal of conversation with, my former pupil."

"O uncle, do not tell me so."

"And why, my dear Katherine, should I not tell you so?—Be assured that nothing passed between us which could in any way

wound your delicacy; and be assured also that what did pass gave me, if possible, a higher opinion than ever of the young man."

"My dear uncle, spare me!—I know that I have always been but too sensible of his worth,—I have long thought that I was not an object of indifference to him; yet believe me when I solemnly assure you that I have with the utmost caution uniformly avoided ever giving him a word, or even a look, of encouragement. Whatever my private feelings might be, and perhaps over them it is impossible to obtain an absolute control, I yet felt so deeply that this was a match my friends never could approve, considering the difference of situation between his family and mine, that I always repelled the idea of it; I considered that it would be almost rendering myself criminal, if I were to return the kindness I have uniformly received from them, by occasioning them so great a mortification merely to gratify selfish feelings of my own."

"My excellent Katherine! how similar are these feelings to those of the object of your affections!"

"O uncle, forbear, I entreat, to use an appellation which seems to me a term of reproach, and hear me with patience to the end. If indeed Mr. Danville has become too much the object of

my affections, think only how I have been circumstanced with regard to him. A thousand and a thousand times have I wished that it had been more in my power to avoid seeing him; but poor Mr. Carberry, deprived as he was of all comfort in his own son, found so great a resource in having this young man almost constantly with him, that it would have been cruel in me to think of saying a word against it:—indeed, how was it possible to have done so without avowing my reasons for it? and that would have been to disclose sentiments which above all things I wished to conceal."

"My dear girl, it cannot be denied that the natural consequences which might be expected from such an intimacy have been put too much out of the question."

"Indeed, uncle, I cannot help observing, that if my relations may be disposed to arraign me as having placed my affections improperly, they should consider how much such attachments are commonly the effect of circumstances;—they should reflect upon the familiar footing on which Samuel was always received among my connections, upon the intimacy which was uniformly *permitted*, or shall I only say *permitted*, shall I not say *encouraged*, between him and me, and then determine whether it was wholly unnatural that my heart should insensibly be-

come attached to him, even before my judgement was sufficiently matured to consider whether such a partiality ought or ought not to be encouraged. We might almost be called children when we first became acquainted; at least we were then too young to be sensible of the danger of suffering such an attachment to take possession of us, or to think of being upon our guard against it. Thus my present sentiments, I may truly say, have grown up with me, till at last they have become, I am afraid, irreversibly fixed in my heart. For, I must fairly confess that I am hopeless ever to conquer my present feelings; the only thing which I believe could make any alteration in them, would be the witnessing such unworthy conduct in Samuel that my esteem could no longer be his; and excuse me, uncle, if I say that of such conduct I believe him wholly incapable."

"Indeed, my love, every thing we have seen of him hitherto entirely justifies that presumption."

"Yet understand, uncle, that while I acknowledge this attachment,—perhaps I ought to call it *weakness*, though indeed I scarcely know how to give it that epithet,—and must confess that it is therefore impossible for me ever to think of uniting myself to any other

man,—I have resolution enough never to think of an union with him, unless I could be assured that it was not merely with the toleration, but that it had the full approbation of those with whom I am connected. I could never bear to see my husband an object *tolerated* only among those by whom I have seen him under another character cherished and caressed. I am contented to lead a single life; my uncle's generosity will make that a matter of ease to me; and while enjoying his kindness, and I hope administering to his comfort, I shall be satisfied with my lot; nor, amid my thankfulness for the blessings I enjoy, ever, I trust, repine at having resisted inclinations which might have interfered with the happiness of those about me. My dear uncle, excuse my having trespassed thus upon your patience; believe me, I never should have said a word upon the subject, if it had not been first mentioned on your side: but now that I have frankly laid open to you my whole heart, I will hope that the conversation may be dropped, and never again on any occasion be resumed."

"No, Katherine, the subject must not be dropped. The sentiments which I have heard today, both from yourself and from Samuel, are so honourable, that I should indeed think myself highly to be condemned if I did not en-

deavour by every means in my power to promote their receiving the reward they deserve. You say that you would never think of bestowing yourself upon a man who was to be only *tolerated* among your relations, because you had conferred upon him the character of your husband. Tell me one thing more, my dear girl, and let me entreat you to be as frank in your present answer, as in the detail you have just given me. If you were fully assured that this object of your attachment loved you as affectionately as you deserve to be beloved; that he would be received among your family with the deference and affection to which his own merits, no less than the distinction which you had conferred upon him, would justly entitle him; and that he would be placed by them in a situation in the world in which it would be no degradation for you to appear;—would it then, I ask, be conformable with your wishes to receive his visits from this time as your destined husband?—Katherine, that blush,—those downcast eyes,—I am answered."

"No, uncle, they must not be your only answer. Why should I be ashamed, after the sentiments I have already avowed, to speak in plain and direct terms? Let me then frankly acknowledge that there is no way in which my happiness could be so effectually promoted."

"This is honest; and I thank you sincerely, my love, for dealing thus honestly with me. I now know what I have to do. Samuel has for some time entertained thoughts of returning to his original destination, the church. Your uncle Ethelred is aware that this is the profession thought of for him, and proposes buying him a living. Will that be such a situation as you will like?"

"My dear uncle, I do not wish to have a choice in the matter. Whatever situation Samuel prefers, and is approved by his friends, will be perfectly agreeable to me. It is from his affection, not from his situation, that my principal happiness must be derived; and enjoying that, the profession he follows will be to me a very secondary consideration."

"Well then, you give me full authority to act on your part according to my own discretion; and I think I can venture to assure you, that if your chief happiness is to depend upon Samuel's affection, there is no reason to apprehend your being very unhappy."

CHAPTER XIII.

Rapid advances made towards the completion of happiness.—Much employment furnished for the imagination of the reader.—Some speculations upon the comparative value of time and paper.—A word or two on coining.—An interesting secret imparted, and a sound nap disturbed.

THE conversation with Katherine, which concluded the last chapter, did not take place till the evening; and the next morning, immediately after breakfast, I had another visit from Mr. Armstrong. After relating to me at large all that had passed both with his brother and his niece, he concluded by saying:—"And now, Samuel, I hope I have urged reasons sufficient to satisfy you that there is no occasion for upholding the self-denying ordinance on which your magnanimity had yesterday resolved. You will see, I trust, that instead of flying *from* Katherine for ever, you may with the utmost propriety fly *to* her without delay; that it is even incumbent upon you to do so, that she may receive from your own mouth an assurance, which, I think, she will have no great difficulty in believing, of your being made one of the happiest of men by the hopes you are permitted, nay, required to entertain."

"Indeed, sir, in saying so, I shall only assert the strictest truth. O Mr. Armstrong, believe me, I know not in what terms to describe my feelings, to express the gratitude, the transports with which my soul is overpowered!—I scarcely know how to persuade myself that I am not in a dream; it seems happiness too great to be real."

"No, my dear Samuel, be assured that it is no dream; you are, believe me, thoroughly awake, and your happiness is real. Katherine is yours; she freely gives herself; her uncle Ethelred and I freely give her to you:—we give her, in the conviction that in so doing we are rewarding you both as you deserve; and we unite in the most ardent wishes, that you may find every idea you have formed to yourselves of happiness in this union, even, if possible, more than realised."

"What can I say!"

"Nothing.—Make Katherine happy, 'tis all the return we ask. Of one thing more, however, you must be informed, that your mind may be entirely satisfied upon the subject. You mentioned Walter's attachment to my niece. He has, I know, been with you to say himself what he thought right upon the subject."

"Indeed he has spoken to me in the kindest, noblest manner."

"Nor have I any doubt that he felt sincerely all he said, and would indeed have been ready to make the greatest sacrifices for the promotion of yours and Katherine's happiness. It must, however, be a satisfaction to you to learn, that I have every reason to believe his passion for his cousin nothing more than one of his usual flights of imagination;—one which, perhaps, is the less surprising, since, for three years, he has never been in the way of seeing any woman with whom he could fancy himself enamoured. Indeed, his very unfortunate connection at Brighton seemed for awhile to have given him something like disgust with the whole sex. Yet his is not a heart where such a sentiment could be fixed for ever. It is full of the most affectionate dispositions, which only want the regulation of a sounder judgement to be rendered truly valuable and interesting to all around him; and I will hope that by time and experience they may be ultimately thus regulated. This, however, is rather to wander from my point. I was going to tell you, that in talking with him I was particularly anxious to investigate minutely the nature and extent of his attachment to Katherine, and I remained in the end fully convinced of his having in reality only such a regard for her as a person of his warmth of heart must naturally

feel for so amiable a relation; not such sentiments as need be suffered in any way to interfere with yours. That he would have been happy in an union with her, I have no doubt; that his affection for her, if he had become her husband, would every day have increased, I have as little doubt; and I am no less confident that she would never have experienced any thing but the kindest treatment from him. I am also disposed to believe that an union with such a woman might have contributed essentially towards fixing his roving disposition, and rendering him more steady. But I am no less firmly of opinion, that his is not such an attachment as that the necessity of combating it will endanger his health being undermined, as I fear has been in some degree the case with you. Make yourself easy then, my dear nephew, for as such I shall henceforth regard you, nor be distressed with the idea that you are sacrificing friendship upon the altar of love."

If any of my readers have been in a situation similar to that in which I found myself at this moment, raised in a few hours from the cruel idea that I had seen for the last time the woman I adored, to the delightful prospect that she would in a short time be mine for ever, such and such only can form any conception of the

tumult of feelings by which I was now agitated. Words are wholly inadequate to the description of them; nor am I quite sure that it would be possible, even if they were describable, to render the description interesting or entertaining. I shall therefore leave the whole matter to the imaginations of those into whose hands these pages may fall, trusting that I shall not merely be excused for it, but that I shall even be allowed to have conferred an obligation upon them. I say this, because I have generally remarked that readers do not love to be told too much; that they had rather something should be occasionally left for their imaginations to supply: and this being the case, I think there never can be an occasion on which imagination may with better effect be left to its full play. If I were to attempt to describe my feelings, those of ardent minds might perhaps find the description cold and languid, in comparison with what they would conceive I ought to have felt; while, on the contrary, persons of a more calm and composed temperament might think I had even overcharged the picture. In the plan I have adopted, each will ascribe to me the exact *quantum* of warmth which they think the occasion required, neither more nor less, and I shall by this means have the happiness of

pleasing all parties; a thing of which I am extremely ambitious.

Ye amiable twelve hundred thousand upon whom I calculate as the perusers of this entertaining History, I must here entreat you not to cavil, if perchance ye should recollect that in the ninth chapter of my third volume I seemed to deprecate a historian's leaving any thing to be supplied by the imagination of his readers, whereas here I appear as the advocate of it. But the two cases differ exceedingly. In the former instance, it was very necessary to establish accurately an important fact with respect to a lapse of time, and precision could not be too rigidly enforced. In the present case, wishing earnestly as I do to be considered by the whole collective body of my readers as feeling with propriety upon an important occasion, I am forcibly impressed with the necessity of leaving them in some sort to figure to themselves how I felt, well convinced that otherwise the hope of having my sensations approved by all must inevitably be foiled.

Gentle readers, in the same ninth chapter above referred to, I made a little digression of a nature somewhat similar to the present, in order to give you all a more precise idea of the portion of time that elapsed on the occasion to which

I allude. My purpose in digressing at this moment is, just to pass over the interval which was occupied by me in pouring out the effusions of joy and gratitude which the favours showered upon me called forth. The terms in which my raptures were expressed I have thought better omitted, for the same reason that I forbore attempting to describe my feelings, that I may avoid the danger of rising into bombast, or sinking into languor. I hope I have by this time made you sufficiently acquainted with my character, that you are perfectly aware of my being endowed with a grateful heart, and are no less sensible that I was terribly in love with Katherine; so that you will give me credit for having been lavish in my expressions both of gratitude and rapture. Suppose then every thing proper on the occasion to have been said by me, and I will then proceed to state that, these ended, Mr. Armstrong mentioned his brother's idea of buying me a living. "But, Samuel," he said, "before any thing is determined relative to your future plans, you had better talk the matter over with Katherine, and I have no doubt that my brother will be equally ready to give you every possible assistance if you should agree in preferring any other mode of life. Samuel, you shall accompany me home, and see my niece. Your

first interview must inevitably be one of considerable agitation on both sides, and the sooner it is got over the better. You will then dine with us, and I will introduce you to my brother, which I neglected to do the other day. It will, I know, be impossible that both you and Katherine should not feel a little awkward, but it will be for this one time only, and there will be an end of it: Ethelred may perhaps indulge himself in some jokes, but you must parry them as well as you can."

Indeed I did feel a little awkward, and not a little agitated, as I walked to the rectory with my revered benefactor, now more revered than ever. I had my interview with Katherine; but again, gentle readers, you must excuse me if I forbear entering into particulars. To confess the truth, it is not altogether in my power. We were, as uncle Bernard predicted, both a little comical at the outset, having so many things to say that we began by a silence of some minutes. I believe it was only some minutes; but I cannot speak with confidence, for my ideas were really so confused that I have no clear recollection of the first meeting. I only know that I never in my life felt more sheepish or more awkward, nor ever was less capable of putting half-a-dozen words together consistently; I have not indeed the least idea how I did

begin when at length I broke the silence. After a while, however, the free use of our recollections as well as of our tongues was restored to us, and the conversation became so agreeable and interesting, that the dinner hour stole upon us before we had any idea that half the morning was expired.

Why then, you will perhaps say, not give us some specimens of this very agreeable conversation?—My dear friends, it is because I am not sure that you would find it as agreeable as we did. If we had been in the cruel situation of having procured by stealth the means of seeing each other, and had been doomed to lament together over the cruelties of parents who thwarted our inclinations;—if we had had to contemplate with anguish the hardships, the difficulties and dangers, we were likely to encounter ere our happiness could be completed, and to make a thousand vows and protestations of unshaken constancy amid them all;—if we had had to form plans of resistance, perhaps to project an elopement together;—if my lot had been to give an affecting representation of circumstances of this nature, which form the life and soul of love scenes, I might have been justified in permitting my pen to descend into particulars. But I know it to be the general opinion among readers of Histories like the present,

that when lovers are happy their têtes à têtes become insipid and uninteresting; and we were both so superlatively happy, that I am afraid we should be found superlatively dull. Excuse, gentle readers, my saying that we were *both* so happy; but indeed, though it may appear almost insufferable vanity to indulge in the idea, I could not help flattering myself that Katherine did not seem less happy than her devoted admirer.

This then being the case with both, our principal object was to express to each other our mutual satisfaction; and though we found a thousand and a thousand pretty modes of varying the terms in which it was expressed; yet as it may not perhaps fall to the lot of many readers to be altogether as happy as we were at this moment, I do not think that, if detailed, the lesson would ever prove of much practical utility; the giving it would therefore perhaps be only a waste of *paper* as well as of *time*. Ah those words!—*Time* has been, readers, when the placing them in the order they now stand, would have been esteemed, to use a common mode of phraseology, *putting the cart before the horse*. *Time* was then considered as of such incalculably higher value than *paper*, that the one never could be brought into comparison with the other: consequently, it would

have been thought little less than high-treason against the majesty of *Time*, not to give him precedence whenever the two words chanced to occupy places in the same period. But, at the present high price of *paper*, I hold the order of things to be so decidedly inverted, that the former order of precedence cannot with any propriety be retained.

Excuse, reader, this re-digression,—excuse too the use of that word; I know that it cannot be justified on the authority of the arch-pontiff of orthoëpy Dr. Johnson: but since he himself was in the habit of coining words, I do not see why I may not be indulged in the same privilege. If you should tell me that I am not a Dr. Johnson, and have not equal talents for coinage, therefore have not equal claims to be indulged in it,—that his words were appropriate, but mine is an uncouth one, and has more the semblance of being produced from my father's forge than from a regular mint,—I bow to your sentence, and having used it on this one occasion will use it no more.

Excuse then, readers, this re-digression, it will serve to fill up a space again, that you may not be set down to the dinner-table in too great a hurry, and rest content with being admitted to so much only of the love scene which now passed between Katherine and myself, as to know that I received from her own lips the

most sweet and ample confession that she always had loved me, nor ever could love any other; and that we traced together with infinite delight the rise and progress of that mutual attachment, which now for the first time we ventured to avow. She told me of a thousand instances which she said convinced her of my sentiments towards her; and while she felt that it was in one respect a very gratifying conviction, it was on another a source of deep regret, as she could never, even in her most sanguine moments, permit herself to look forward to the happiness we were now enjoying.

Well, I afterwards dined with the company, having been first presented in due form to uncle Ethelred. From him I had a very hearty squeeze by the hand, accompanied with a solemn assurance that he should cut my head off without any ceremony if I did not make Kate as good a husband as she deserved. The day passed off very pleasantly; uncle Ethelred was all cheerfulness and good-humour, and I never saw uncle Bernard look more pleased and happy. I returned home in the evening, if possible, more in love than before, but yet scarcely knowing how to feel convinced that I might actually thenceforward consider myself as the destined husband of Katherine.

"Father," I said, when I had seated myself

with him and my mother over the kitchen fire, and hemmed three or four times;—"Father, what should you say—Hem—what should you say—Hem—if I were to tell you—Hem—to tell you that I—that I am going—going—to be—to be married?"

"Why, surely, Sam, you don't say such a thing!" he eagerly exclaimed, taking his pipe hastily from his mouth, while his eyes were sparkling with delight,—"Why, surely, you don't say so?—and who is the lass?—though perhaps you are only joking me."

"No, father, indeed it is not a joke,—'tis all very true.—At least, I mean, if you approve it, for I would not upon any account take such an important step without yours and my mother's entire approbation."

"O, for that matter, never fear, if she be but a nice lass. You know, Sam, it has always been the greatest desire of our hearts to see you well married and settled; and 'tis my opinion that you never would make a bad choice: so now let us hear about it."

"You don't guess then, father?"

"Mayhap, 'tis one of those lasses that I talked to you about when first you went to Mr. Carberry's?"

"One of the Miss Fentons, I suppose, you mean?"

" Yes, so I do, Sam; I always somehow had a thought that you might take one of them at last."

" No, no, father, 'tis not one of them. You know I always told you, that though they were good kind of girls, I never could think of either as a wife."

" Well, I am sure then, Sam, I can't guess."

" What should you say to Miss Middleton?"

" Nay now, Sam, I'm sure you are jeering It never can be that you are to have such an honour."

" Indeed, father, it is very true."

" What, is it really, though?—Well now then 'tis all out. I says to my old dam yesterday, I can't think, Hannah, says I, what Mr. Armstrong can be come about, says I It must be something very particular, says I, for he always used to send for Sam when he wanted to speak to him, and now he's come himself, and has been talking with him a matter of two hours; to be sure, 'tis all mighty odd Then you was so comical, somehow, at dinner I declare I was almost frightened. You seemed to fare half like a crazy man, never speaking a word, and scarcely eating half a dozen mouthfuls, though Hannah had got a nice hen turkey for dinner, with eggs, such as you used to be

so wonderful fond of; and the moment we had done, away you went, and walked about the garden, no more like yourself than nothing at all. And then Mr. Walter, too, he came; and you set and talked together in the parlour nobody knows how long, instead of going out a walking as you partly always used to do. So I says to Hannah, I can't for the life of me think, says I, what can be the matter with Sam, which sometimes when I was there nursing him down at Brighton, I used to think he was a little comical, but never any thing like what he is now. But perhaps, says I, he's thinking about his studies at college, which I have heard say that thinking a great deal about them there studies does make people sometimes very comical and out of the way; so says I, 'Tis my thought that it's better not to disturb him and say any thing to him; and Hannah she thought the same. And then Mr. Armstrong, he comes again this morning, and away you goes with him, and never comes home to dinner, nor ever sends word about not coming, which I never knowed you do so before; but how should you think about sending word of any thing, when I suppose you was busy talking about this affair?"

"Indeed, father, you must excuse me, for I know I have behaved very oddly ever since I came home."

"For that matter, Sam, there's no forgiving to be thought about when you tell us such joyful news. I did think that there must be something in the wind. And who knows, says I to Hannah, what it may be? If it should be such good fortune as that Mr. Armstrong has heard of a living for him, and so he'll be a clergyman at last! But that would be such great happiness, says I, that I could never dare so much as to think of it. But as to such an honour as marrying Miss Kitty, why, Sam, I can hardly believe now but what you're jeering of me."

"Indeed, father, you may believe me;—I can assure you that it is very true."

"Well, I always said that I thought it would please God some time or other to reward you for doing so right and so proper about Mr. Carberry's will; and now to be sure he does send such a reward as I never could be so presuming to think of. Nobody shall ever put it out of my head, but that it's partly because of your giving up the fortune there, that Miss Kitty's friends consents to the match. For I suppose, Sam, they are quite agreeable to it, by your going and staying there to dinner; and besides, I can't think that you or Miss Kitty either would have such notions if Mr. Armstrong didn't consent."

"Indeed, father, he is so good as to say that he entirely approves the match."

"But, Sam, what are you to do then? how are you to maintain her?"

"There is another thing, father, which will give you very great pleasure. Mr. Ethelred Armstrong takes upon himself entirely to provide for his niece, and engages to settle me in any way that I wish. If I choose to take orders, he will buy me a living."

"What! will he indeed though?—Then, I suppose, you will be a clergyman at last, Sam, and I shall hear you preach?"

I cannot describe the look, the air of ecstasy with which this exclamation was uttered; it seemed to say that it ought to fix my choice without further hesitation. And yet I was still not sufficiently resolved upon what I should do, to commit myself so far as wholly to confirm these hopes. I only answered that nothing was yet determined: "Mr. Ethelred," I said, "has equally offered, if I had rather follow any other profession, to support me in it till I am able to support myself. In short, he kindly says that we may do whatever we please with his money; it shall be all ours first or last, and may be employed in any way that will contribute the most to our happiness: all he desires is, that I should follow some profession so as

not to be idle, and that wherever we go, or whatever we do, he may live with us."

"Well, to be sure, that is great indeed; and I think there scarcely ever was such another uncle to be found in the world. Nothing will ever put it out of my head that it pleases God to reward both you and Miss Kitty in this way, for despising money in comparison of doing justice to Master Edward and Miss Sophia. But I say, Sam, I suppose Mr. Ethelred thinks, then, that Miss Kitty has a great kindness for you?"

"I believe he does, father."

"And I dare say right enough, too.—I always said, didn't I, Hannah? that I thought somehow the lasses must like Sam. But then for Miss Kitty to like you, that is such a very great honour as I never could be presuming enough to think of, which I suppose she might have had either a bishop's or a lord's son if she had pleased. But what signify lords' or even dukes' sons if one can't fancy them? There's no good, I'm sure, in having money, and in being ladies and gentlemen, but to please our fancies. I dare say that so Miss Kitty thinks, and in the right of it too, God bless her! Which I hope, Sam, that if you couldn't love her, you'd never think of having her, though she is a lady, for that could never be pleasing in the sight of God. But

then nobody can suppose but what you must fancy her, such a nice young lady as she is."

On this head I satisfied my father entirely; and indulged him with giving a very detailed history of the whole rise, progress, and conclusion of the affair; for I saw that his curiosity concerning it was very much awakened. I told him how that I had loved Katherine ever since I went first to Christ's hospital, though for a long time almost insensibly to myself; which that he thought exceedingly natural. I told him, besides, what had made me sometimes so comical and sharp with him, while nursing me at Brighton, and explained to him in short every circumstance relative to the affair; which, as he justly observed, did give him great pleasure, because he was vexed if ever he saw me comical and could not make out what was the matter: but when people is in love, he observed, and is crossed like as I was, 'tis no wonder if they are not always quite as people could wish. It was not till the clock announced the conclusion of the second hour after midnight, our usual time of retiring being ten, that he could think of breaking up so interesting a detail. Being then, however, in full possession of the story, he began to be of opinion that it would be as well to go and sleep upon it. This my mother had thought expedient to be done when

she was in possession of only a very small part of it. She was certainly exceedingly delighted at the prospect of my nuptials; but sleep will sometimes overcome joy as well as sorrow; and it overcame her joy exactly at the time when she was accustomed on ordinary occasions to yield to its influence. From that moment she had been as profoundly insensible to what was passing as if she had been in her bed. It was now, however, determined to rouse her, which could only be done by a very hearty shake; and this performed, the remainder of the discussion was adjourned to the breakfast-table in the morning.

CHAPTER XIV.

The merits of different professions once more analysed and compared.—Interesting conversations and important determinations.—Past errors confessed and forgiven.—A very agreeable invitation made and accepted.

VARIOUS discussions now took place at the rectory. The first point to be settled was the profession I was to follow. This I would fain have referred to Katherine's decision; but she urged its being determined between me and her uncles, not forgetting to allow my father's wishes upon the occasion all proper weight. The question seemed to be entirely between divinity, law, and physic; and she assured me that she had no decided preference to either; whichever was the most consonant to my inclinations would be the most agreeable to her. I cannot say but that I felt a spark of my old passion for the law rekindled in my bosom; and I thought that, if I could but arrive at distinction there, I should then have the pleasure of reflecting, that whereas Katherine was now in some sort degrading herself by the alliance she was forming, it might ultimately prove the means of her elevation.

It was very evident, however, that my fa-

ther's old inclinations had no more forsaken him than mine had abandoned me; and that he would rather see me in either of the other professions, but that his decided wish was for the church. He had the remembrance of former altercations, however, too deeply engraven on his mind to venture upon speaking very warmly in its favour; an oblique hint or two upon the subject was all he allowed himself, given, however, in such a way that his wishes were not to be mistaken. To this side, too, uncle Ethelred inclined. He was a peaceable man, he said, and could not very much like a profession where one must be always wrangling with somebody or other. For his part, he should be afraid, that at last, rather than not be in an eternal wrangle, I should get to one now and then with my wife; "and then, a scape grace," he added, "he must have one with me too."

"As for physic," he said, "he was not very fond of that neither; such a continual bother of visiting patients from morning till night, not even being suffered to lie quiet in your bed. And though I might bring home a good many fees, that would be more than I should want, for he should have money enough for us without so much plague. Besides, Kate would then have so little of my

company; and, poor thing! he was sure she would not like that; there was no comfort in having a husband if he was to be always running this way and that way, and never at home with his wife.—No, no, the boy had far better be made a clergyman, for then we can buy him a living, and there'll be an end of it. He can make his sermons in peace and quiet at home, and look after his children, and teach them himself, and see that they don't get into mischief, and Kitty may have as much of his company as she pleases."

"My dear Samuel," said uncle Bernard, "it seems very plain which way my brother and your father are disposed: but if any part of your former repugnance to the church remains, I still recommend to you, as I did on a former occasion, not to think of it. Much respect is due to their wishes, but some also must be had to your own."

"May I be forgiven, sir," I replied, "if I make a confession to you? At the period alluded to, the objections I urged against going into the church, I faithfully believed to be those by which alone I was influenced. I did not purposely disguise any sentiment of my heart, though from subsequent circumstances I am convinced that it was very much swayed by one not then confessed; but at the time I was not

in the least sensible of the power it had over me. It was only on being afterwards awakened to a strict examination of my sentiments, that I perceived how much I had been governed by this throughout the affair. I had, as you will recollect, sir, from about my thirteenth year lived in habits of extreme intimacy with your amiable niece; and I will now own, without hesitation, that I believe it was more from the idea of being fixed for ever at a distance from her, than from any other, that I shrunk so decidedly from taking orders. To this feeling I believe may be ascribed the dislike I conceived at the idea of going to college; it was this which rendered the year that I did spend there so dreadfully irksome to me; and I now believe that but for this the idea of going into Mr. Carberry's counting-house had never entered my mind. Thus far, at least, I can say to a certainty, that one of my principal pleasures in thinking of it, was the idea that the many delightful hours I had been accustomed to spend in the society of Miss Middleton were about to be renewed.

"O Mr. Armstrong, pardon me when I own this!—I was too much under a delusion myself to have any idea that I was deceiving you, and was shocked beyond measure when convinced that I had been practising such a

deception. Yet, when awakened from my delusion, I thought that my fault would only be aggravated by owning it, since the guilt could not be disclosed without referring to its cause, and that would be to confess a presumption of the criminality of which I was but too conscious; I therefore determined to remain silent. Alas, what severe conflicts have I been doomed to sustain, since I became sensible of the state of my heart!—The situation I once so much coveted, I would then have given the world to abandon, since, by retaining it, I was only feeding a passion which I knew I ought to consider as hopeless. More than once I have sighed to return to the way of life I had forsaken, even at the expense of violating my filial duty, and that in order to shun the very woman for the sake of being near whom it had been sacrificed. It will not then I hope appear like caprice, if I assure you that I have not now the least repugnance to going into the church, but shall hope, if I do so, to discharge properly the duties I take upon myself. Besides, what was really the most solid objection that I then urged, and I still think it was a very important one, is now removed by the proposed kindness of Mr. Ethelred Armstrong; I mean the indifferent prospect I had of ever being comfortably established in the profession."

"I can, indeed, my young friend, readily enter into the feelings you describe, and excuse the conduct resulting from them; I can believe that you might be acted upon very powerfully by them, without being aware that they existed. The experience of more than fifty years in the world, has convinced me that we are often, in a thousand instances, exceedingly blind to the real motives by which we are actuated, and are ready to substitute for them ostensible ones, which have but a very secondary influence over us. It is certain that, if I had been impressed with any idea of the true state of your heart, I should have given you very different advice; I should have exhorted you earnestly to follow the path along which filial duty would lead you; and that from the double motive that it was so recommended, and that by flying the object of a passion which you were not authorised to encourage, you were taking the best means in your power of combating it. As things appeared to me, I advised you according to what I thought for the best under the circumstances then existing; this is all a mortal can do; nor even now do I think that either you or myself were to blame. You could not confess a motive of which you were not yourself sensible; and I could not presume its existence, without any foundation

to lead me to it. That it should exist, is no reproach to you. The attachments we form are almost inevitably much more the effect of feeling and of circumstances, than of reason; they steal upon us unawares, and are irrevocably fixed in the soul before we become sufficiently aware of them to ask ourselves whether they ought to be encouraged or not. That, living upon the terms of intimacy you did at my sister's house, you should insensibly to yourself contract a strong attachment to my niece, I must say, I think, was most natural. As I do not consider it necessary that an uncle should be, or should pretend to be, blind to his niece's merits, I will fairly own that I think Katherine a woman most worthy under every point of view to be loved. But it was not, perhaps, wise in those with whom she was connected, to suffer such an intimacy without considering the very natural consequence to which it was likely to lead. Heaven be praised that the man to whom she has thus been led almost unavoidably to attach herself, and who has almost by a like necessity fixed his affections so irrevocably upon her, is one on whom we can bestow her with such perfect satisfaction!"

"Indeed, sir, I cannot say how much my gratitude is excited by the very kind and cau-

did view you take of the subject. I am ready to acknowledge that it is much more than I deserve."

"Yet tell me, Samuel,—do you really suppose that neither my sister nor Mr. Carberry ever suspected this attachment?"

"I think I can safely say that Mr. Carberry did not; I could not speak in terms of equal confidence with regard to Mrs. Carberry. There was an occasion on which I was very much alarmed with the apprehension that she did suspect it; but as I found no alteration in her behaviour to me, I afterwards flattered myself that my fears were groundless. Miss Middleton, however, tells me that she has sometimes been afraid her mother suspected her partiality to me."

"I hope she is right."

"Sir!"

"Yes, Samuel, I hope she is right. For if Eleanor had such suspicions, and still encouraged your visits, I shall be convinced that if she had been alive she would not have disapproved the union which I have promoted."

"My dear sir, you quite overpower me."

"To return, however, to the subject from which we have wandered.—There seems then no longer to exist any objection to your complying with the wishes of your father and my

brother Ethelred, and taking orders. You can assure me that you have no feelings remaining adverse to it?"

"None, I can assure you, sir: on the contrary, I feel most happy in the idea; satisfied as I am that there is no other way in which I can so well repay the sacrifices my father has made for me."

"And I rejoice sincerely that his wishes will at last be fully gratified. I must say, too, that he deserves such a gratification. I am not insensible to the victory he must have obtained over his own feelings when he consented to your relinquishing the profession; and I think very great credit is due to him, that from the moment his consent was given he never suffered a word of reproach upon the subject to escape him. It is impossible, however, not to advert to the little reliance which daily experience shows us is to be placed on all human foresight. You thought, and so did I, your prospects very indifferent in the church, and good in the coal-trade; so, indeed, must every reasoning person have thought from the aspect of things at that time. How opposite has been the event! Even at the moment when your flattering prospects in the latter seemed realized, one cruel stroke dispersed them all; while very shortly after the gloom that seemed to envelop your

hopes in the other was dissipated, and we now fortunately see the promotion of your temporal interests going hand in hand with your gratifying the wishes of those around you. Your father acted the part of a wise man, and so I shall tell him, in yielding to you as he did, since no one could foresee what was to happen; and events almost always show us how much wiser it is, even to ourselves, to bend in a certain degree in such cases to the wishes of others, than to endeavour pertinaciously to resist them and enforce our own. A more determined resistance at that moment, on his part, might have fixed in you an aversion to the profession which nothing could ever have subdued; while by a partial compliance, and waiting the operation of time and circumstances, he will have the gratification of seeing this great object of his heart ultimately obtained."

The conclusion of the whole matter then was, that my election was made for the church, and the joyful tidings were communicated to my father without delay. The Lord Mayor's coach instantly vanished into air, it was no longer worth a man's regarding, while in its place stood erect before him those more delightful objects, the throne, the mitre, and the lawn-sleeves. He never could enough express his gratitude to that Providence which had so

wonderfully, he said, brought about at last the accomplishment of his wishes, long after he had resigned himself to abandoning them entirely; nor could he ever enough acknowledge the goodness of Mr. Ethelred, who, by promising to provide for me, had entirely reconciled my mind to what I once thought I should so much dislike. He had immediately a dozen or two of texts from scripture ready, which he recommended to me as subjects for sermons; nay, I am not certain whether it was not the very same evening that he sat down and sketched ideas for one on the fourteenth verse of the second chapter of St. James. "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?" The inefficacy of faith without works had always been a favourite topic with him, and he had particular pleasure in looking forward to my enforcing this doctrine from the pulpit. Indeed, when he laid before me the ideas he had sketched, I found them so entirely in conformity with my own, that I afterwards readily availed myself of them, and, having modelled and arranged them into a proper form, actually delivered them to my congregation: this was, indeed, a moment of transcendent delight to my father.

It was determined that I should continue to

keep my terms at college, so as to take my bachelor of arts degree in the regular way: this, however, would not preclude my taking orders immediately; and as I wanted only three months of being four-and-twenty, it was probable that I should be ready to take a living before a living would be ready for me. As to the time when we were to be married, uncle Bernard suggested our waiting till I had taken my degree, and could settle entirely at home: but uncle Ethelred said he saw no sense in that; I could go to college when I was wanted; and if I must not take Kate with me, that could not be helped, I must go by myself, and he would take care of her during my absence. Indeed, for that matter, he said, since the thing was agreed upon, he thought the sooner it was concluded the better,—that we might just as well be married the next week as not. He expected every day to hear that Mr. Shelburne had hired the house for him, and then we could all go there; and as to buying gowns and such sort of things, Kate could do that just as well afterwards: indeed, he did not know why she should buy any, for he had boxes full of things which he had brought from India, and they should all be hers. Uncle Bernard, however, thought the next week rather too precipitate: so the matter was at length compromised between the brothers,

and it was arranged that I should go and keep my next term, after which would come the long vacation, and when I returned for that, the wedding should take place. At the beginning of term then I returned to college, so happy, that every thing assumed to me a new aspect; I found charms in the place, and in my studies, to which I had been before insensible; for my mind was at ease, saving and excepting a little impatience to get back to the society of my beloved Katherine.

It was not many days after I left Langham that uncle Ethelred also took his leave for a time of his brother and his niece, having a variety of business to settle in London. All his ideas had been hitherto absorbed in the delight of finding such a niece, and in doing every thing possible to promote her happiness, to the neglect of a thousand other objects which demanded his attention: to these, therefore, it was now to be given. A bed being vacated in the rectory by his departure, Mr. Armstrong immediately wrote to Mr. Anderson, stating that he had one now at liberty, and that he hoped he would occupy it without delay. This summons was instantly obeyed. The meeting between the two friends was with mingled sensations of pain and delight;—of pain, in the recollection that any thing could have occa-

sioned an alienation from each other, and particularly at the real unhappiness and chagrin to which the unfortunate misconceptions of the one, and the well-intentioned but mistaken secrecy in the other, had given occasion;—of delight, that they had not gone out of the world under such false impressions, but had come at last to a right understanding.

It was almost a matter of course, that during this visit Mrs. Northington should become the frequent subject of their conversation. She had now been a widow full two years and a half, and had paid even a longer tribute to the memory of a worthless husband than decency could require. Mr. Armstrong's attachment continued unabated; but notwithstanding his wishes, he had hesitated for a time whether he ought to pursue the idea of an union with her. In the former instance he had condemned himself to silence, on account of his sisters; it was now the daughter of his beloved Eleanor who seemed to present something like a similar obstacle to his inclinations being followed; for awhile she appeared scarcely less in want of an asylum than her mother had been when she came first to Langham. A sort of fatality seemed attached to poor Eleanor, that living or dead she was to be in some way or other a source of embarrassment to the brother whose happiness she

had ever been so desirous of promoting. It was not however clear, even while resting under the impression of his house being the proper asylum for his niece, that its becoming so was wholly incompatible with his other favourite object. The parties were under very different circumstances from what they had been thirty years before. Mrs. Northington was now in possession of a very affluent fortune; and deficiency of means would not therefore present an obstacle to his uniting himself to her, even though he should feel it incumbent upon him at the same time to shelter and support Katherine. Yet it was one thing to offer himself alone, or only with the addition of a grown up son; another, to offer himself with so many incumbrances. Though she might have been happy to find in him a companion and friend, whose society and affection would recompense all that she had suffered in her former marriage, she might not like in addition to his society that of two nieces and a nephew.

These were the suggestions that presented themselves to Mr. Armstrong's mind, on his first receiving Mr. Anderson's overtures towards a reconcilation;—overtures which seemed upon the face of them to open a door for a closer connection being proposed. But in the interval that passed before it was possible

for the visit of pacification to be made, such a change of circumstances had taken place, that Mr. Armstrong now saw with sincere delight the path smoothed before him. His two nieces and nephew taken in charge by their uncle Ethelred, and Katherine about to be disposed of in wedlock, no obstacle any longer existed on their account to his binding himself in the silken fetters for which he languished. It only remained to assure himself that a reasonable chance appeared of his suit, if presented, meeting with a favourable hearing. To sound Mr. Anderson therefore upon his niece's sentiments, became a very important object with him. This he determined to do not circuitously, but in fair and open terms. He was resolved not to run the hazard of losing her a second time, by any want of openness and sincerity.

"Yes indeed, my dear sir," he said, as they were talking over past occurrences, "I did most sincerely love Miss Westbourne, I have never ceased to love her, and nothing but excess of delicacy towards her prevented an early declaration of my sentiments. I was well aware how indifferent my prospects were in the world, and that in offering her my heart it was all I had to offer. I knew that the prospect of our union being completed must be a very distant one, and I feared to stand in the

way of her better fortunes. These considerations, and these alone, made me at first hesitate whether I could be justified in seeking to bind her by so disadvantageous an engagement; I was afterwards more strongly withheld by the duties which I conceived myself called upon to practise as a brother. Yet I can invoke Heaven itself to witness, that all this time never was a heart more devoted to any one than mine was to your niece. I can even now show you, my friend, a letter which I had nearly completed when I received the news of my Anastasia's marriage. It was written when, having only one sister left on my hands, I thought it not inconsistent with my fraternal duties to take upon myself conjugal ones. I then after some hesitation resolved to apply to you as a former friend; though, alas! I had already some reason to fear your friendship towards me less ardent than it had been. Yet I determined on venturing to put it to the proof, by addressing myself to you upon the subject, and endeavouring to engage you as my intercessor with your niece.

"Yes; such a letter was nearly completed, and is still in my possession. Before I had put the finishing stroke to it, the fatal news reached me. I cannot describe my sensations,—no words can paint the bitterness of my disap-

pointment, when, after flattering myself for ten years that she had been reserving herself for me,—and I will own that I had been vain enough to persuade myself such was the case; —but after having buoyed myself up with this hope for so long a time, it would be difficult for a more heart-rending disappointment to be experienced, than was my lot when I found she had bestowed herself upon another. I scarcely speak in figures when I say that the news seemed to me like a dagger plunged into my breast; it was with difficulty that I could breathe for some minutes, I scarcely knew where I was, and questioned myself a thousand times whether the fact was to be believed or not. I read the fatal intelligence over and over again, but every time of reading it less and less doubt of its truth remained upon my mind. It was put in so circumstantially, and the parties were so definitely described, that I could not but feel assured of its being inserted under their own sanction. Though four-and-twenty years have passed since the event took place, the impressions it made upon me are as vivid in my mind as if it had been but yesterday. I can at this moment repeat the paragraph verbatim, the words seem even now before my eyes. It was in one of the London papers, among the list of marriages, and ran thus: 'On Thursday last,

at Ludlow, Henry Francis Northington, Esq. of Altringham in the county of Shropshire, to Miss Anastasia Westbourne, daughter of the late Rev. Christopher Westbourne, prebendary of the cathedral church of Worcester, and rector of Marsden in Herefordshire.'

"O my friend! you thought me attached to, engaged to, poor Sophia.—Alas! how little you knew my heart!—Nothing was wanting to make me completely, superlatively miserable, but the information which I received from Eleanor in a few hours after this fatal news had reached me. What! was it not enough to feel my heart so cruelly torn by being deprived of the only woman whom I ever had loved or ever could love, but must I also be told that tortures of a similar nature were at that moment suffered by another on my account? This was really more than my fortitude could well support. I could have borne any stroke better than the assurance that I was occasioning to others, though unintentionally, wretchedness such as I then myself experienced. But let me not dwell on the conflict which it occasioned me; the retrospect even now harrows up my soul. What a moment was this, to be called upon to take a resolution upon a subject of so much delicacy!—upon a subject which ought only to have been decided under the in-

fluence of the coolest reason, of the most unembarrassed judgement. Fain would I have forgotten that there was such a person in the world as Anastasia Westbourne; the other question would then have been more impartially decided. My friend, I never could satisfy myself whether I acted right or wrong, for I am conscious that it was feeling much rather than judgement which at length determined my conduct. I could not bear the idea of Sophia's suffering a tenth part of what I then endured myself; her troubles seemed not without a remedy, though mine were; and I thought that I could never stand acquitted to my own heart if the remedy were withheld.

"Such, and such only, were indeed my feelings towards Sophia. For the sake of a beloved sister, I had always entertained a sort of brotherly affection for her, had always felt that it would give me sincere pleasure if it should ever be in my power to promote her happiness in any other way. Her disposition was truly artless and amiable, and it was impossible for that reason not to feel a certain degree of interest for her; yet I think that she was not the sort of woman ever to have touched my heart, even if it had been wholly free when first I knew her. Feeling these sentiments alone towards my wife, feeling myself unable

by any means to throw off the chains in which my heart had so long been held, you will not, my friend, conceive my wedded happiness to have been very great. It was, besides, no small mortification to see that the sacrifice I had made was wholly nugatory. Had I seen the roses revive on the faded cheek of my Sophia, —had I seen the bloom of health succeed to the languor of disease, and been afforded the consolation of thinking that, if a martyr myself to inward chagrin, I had at least rescued her from martyrdom,—had these pleasing reflections been afforded me, they might have solaced my heart, and soothed me at length into such a state, that I should perhaps have enjoyed conjugal serenity, though I never could have experienced what could truly be called conjugal happiness, that delightful feeling that the object to which I was united was all in all to me.

"But even this consolation was denied me. I wedded, alas! only to be a nurse for eighteen months; Sophia's health continued so uniformly declining from the moment of our marriage, that almost the only attentions her situation permitted of my showing her were of that nature. And O! shall I add that I am afraid the state of her health may have been the fountain head of all the uneasiness I have ex-

perienced from the sickliness, if I may so express myself, both of mind and body, which I have had to lament in my son? If then I erred in my conduct, both with regard to my Anastasia and to poor Sophia, I think, my friend, you will have no hesitation in owning that it was not with impunity. My fate has been somewhat singular. Detesting the conduct of too many of our sex towards the other, —indignant at the manner in which I see men sometimes trifle with the feelings of women, and play the coquet with them,—I wished above all things to be able to reflect that my own conduct had been irreproachable on this score. Yet, by a strange fatality, while I would willingly have sacrificed my life to promote the happiness of Anastasia Westbourne, I was perhaps the principal occasion of all her misery, since, if it had not been from pique at my behaviour, her friends might possibly never have persuaded her into the unfortunate connection she formed. I would with scarcely less pleasure have done any thing in my power, except marrying her, to promote Sophia's happiness, and it was my fate to marry her at the sacrifice of my feelings certainly, if not of my judgement; yet I had the mortification of seeing this ineffectual to accomplish the end designed. There was a third woman, too, whose happiness

was particularly dear to me, my beloved Eleanor, and I was innocently the cause of her sacrificing herself by contracting a marriage in which the heart had no share."

"Indeed, my good friend, you have here drawn a very dreary picture; and it is with the most sincere regret that I feel myself deeply implicated in creating the causes which have furnished the sketch. I certainly was overhasty in my conclusions; but such is the fate of man, that too often, even in the most important matters, he is led almost unavoidably to judge from the mere surface of things. In many cases it is not possible for him to penetrate further into them; in many more, I am afraid, where better opportunities of information are afforded, from indolence or preconceived prejudices he will not make use of them. I own I was to blame. I had been absent for seven years, and out of the way of seeing how things were really going on; yet I took upon myself to judge of them as authoritatively as if I had remained always on the spot; and I accordingly judged very erroneously. But neither have my errors remained without their punishment. They have been the cause of my seeing a niece, the child of my only sister, whom I loved as if she had been my own child, long endure a state of cruel suffering and degradation; and they

have deprived me for a course of years of the friendship of one in whose society I had been accustomed to find a particular charm, and should have continued to do so but for the prejudices I had suffered my mind to conceive against him."

"Well, then, these confessions being reciprocally made, let me now ask fairly and openly, Do you think Mrs. Northington's mind still retains sufficient traces of its former sentiments to receive with favour professions which, you assure me, would four-and-twenty years ago decidedly have not been unacceptable to her? So great a lapse of time will unavoidably have made a change in the nature of our sentiments towards each other; but, if less of lovers, may not a sincere friendship, sanctioned by that tie which alone can give it respectability in the eyes of the world, throw a sunshine round the evening of our days, which we sought in vain in their meridian? I can truly say, that my sentiments with regard to her are such, that I cannot conceive greater happiness for myself than to pass the remainder of my life united in such a friendship."

"And I think I may safely answer that you will find in my niece, if put to the proof, sentiments perfectly correspondent."

"What then remains but to make the experiment?"

"If such be really your determination, I would propose your accompanying me to Glenmore at my return. My niece and her *protégée*, Louisa Elliott, would have been there even now, but that I put them off for a time on receiving your summons, determined that nothing should longer delay our interview. They will, however, come to me immediately on my return; and I have no doubt that Glenmore will receive a great additional charm to Anastasia, from being made the scene of such a reunion.

"You know, my good friend, that I do not often make excursions from my parish. The time has been, indeed, when on account of my health journeys were interdicted to me; but I am now so well, and this invitation is so agreeable to me, that I cannot resist it."

All things were then soon arranged for the journey; and in ten days after, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Armstrong, and Walter set out together for Glenmore.

CHAPTER XV.

An interesting dissertation upon projects, with a few words on specimens, and an apology concerning courtships.—Another marriage agreed upon, and yet another in prospect.—A resignation and promotion.—Unbounded happiness.

READER, would you wish to have the courtship which now ensued between Mr. Armstrong and his former *enamorata* given in the detail, or only in the abstract? It is a great misfortune to an author, as I have before had occasion to observe, that the suffrages of his readers cannot be taken upon a variety of points before his book becomes a book finally and irrevocably, and it is too late for him to be influenced by them. Great would be the obligation of our society to any one who in the present inventive age, when we have *professors* in so many arts of which our ancestors never dreamt, —when even *memory* is no longer a gift of nature, or rather of the God of nature, but is to be purchased of the *professor* ;—when the use of horses is about to be superseded by the puff of a pair of bellows * ;—and instead of pacing for

* See the Monthly Magazine for September 1812, page 15.

many an hour along a road before we arrive at our journey's end, we are to be whizzed off to it in as many minutes through an iron tube like a cannon ball :—when improvements such as these are going forward in the world, great would be the obligation to authors if some genius, similarly gifted, would invent a means of their ascertaining with perfect exactitude how their works in general, or perhaps only particular passages in them, would be received by the public before they think of committing them to the press.

Such a *professorship*, if once well established, might be the means of sparing many a heart-ach now received from the lash of the critic's pen. Advertised beforehand by application to the *professor* how much his work was in danger of being hashed, slashed, mauled, and mangled, by this formidable scourge, the author might weed it so as to suit the fancies of the mighty aristarchs by whom the public taste is, or ought to be, ruled ; and thus moulded, it might not unreasonably expect to enjoy a degree of fame scarcely inferior to that which every where attends the works of the critics themselves. For it is notorious, as we are assured on no less authority than their own verdicts, that these are the works which above all others are the most deserving of, and which enjoy the

largest share of, the public favour. To one heart-ach, indeed, authors might perhaps in this case be very liable;—that when dreaming of the vast reputation they were to acquire by some darling production ready to appear before the world, on applying to the *professor*, it might be found that instead of the fame expected . . . . . But let me not think of this! for who shall say that such might not be my own case? and I am so extremely desirous of coming forward into notice as an author, that I own I should be deeply wounded at the least word of discouragement uttered against publishing my book.

It is true, that there is one mode of feeling the pulse of the public to which an author may always have recourse, and which has not unfrequently been practised: this is, to print a few specimens of his work, and take the general suffrage upon them before he thinks of venturing upon the mighty task of printing *in toto*. But even when these specimens have been received with favour, it has not always followed as a matter of course that the entire work has been so. This may, however, be very naturally accounted for in two or three different ways. As the corn-dealer, when he brings his sample of wheat into the market, does not introduce into it any of the mildewed or smutty grains which may chance to form a part of his general stock,

so an author would certainly not select as a part of his specimens any passages which would be equally liable to exception. Besides, as the specimens are commonly short, and the book itself may perhaps be very long,—while a reader might be able to get through the former with no more than two or three yawns, he might be fast asleep before he had travelled over a tenth part of the latter.

Now on this occasion I certainly might print specimens of my talents in painting a courtship, and take the voice of the public on my capacity or incapacity for giving with effect all the nice and delicate shadings which such a picture requires; resolving to be determined by that voice whether to devote some half dozen chapters to giving all the minutiæ of the courtship in question, or whether to dismiss it in as many lines. I wish this idea of specimens had occurred to me at the commencement of my work, I might perhaps then have availed myself of it largely: at present I have gone on so far without it, that I think it scarcely worth while to begin. I must, therefore, be content to decide the question entirely for myself, resting in the hope that my decision will be sanctioned by the public approbation.

It appears then to me that on the *pro* side, in this matter, one solitary argument can alone

be urged, whereas, that several *assez important* may be adduced on the *con.* The *pro* is, that throughout the book not one courtship has yet been given at full length, and that a history of this kind must be considered as exceedingly incomplete without one. I indeed recollect that I have not recorded a single kiss given by any lover to his mistress. No, reader, I have not even told you whether, in the process of my courtship with Katherine, I did or did not venture to give her one. If I did, however, to have published it would have been to *kiss and tell*, and that in a lover is wholly unpardonable. Perhaps, therefore, my readers and I shall scarcely separate on good terms, unless one courtship at least is given in detail; and it may be thought that a better opportunity for its introduction can hardly be presented, since there are none of those mighty events going forward at this moment, which keep the reader breathless with expectation, and might make him give an ugly pshaw! if interrupted by the pretty and, as he might be tempted to style them, nothingly things which form the detail of courtship.

But against this argument it must be observed, that the parties now courting are both arrived at the sober age of past fifty; and perhaps the younger part of my readers will think that at that age they had no business to court at all;

it was scarcely allowable for them even to think of marrying. If, however, they must needs marry, for Heaven's sake let their hands be joined quietly, without the nonsense of going through a courtship as if they were a boy and girl of nineteen and twenty.—So then, gentle reader, you do think that a courtship is a little nonsensical?—Well, if such be your opinion, I certainly will not contradict it: but I must remark that you here furnish me with a very powerful argument on the negative side of giving you a courtship,—for know, that I am excessively tenacious of not having any thing in my book which can be called nonsensical. This then settles the matter at once. I was going to have produced a dozen other solid and substantial reasons why I should give the courtship only in the abstract, but they are all superseded by this reflection;—I will not have any thing nonsensical in my book:—now you tell me that a courtship is nonsensical, therefore I will not have a courtship.

So then, reader, you must be content to know that the Reverend Bernard Armstrong, having good reason to suppose that he should not be refused if he offered himself to Anastasia Northington, (for he no more than any other man much liked the idea of being refused,) made his proposals to her in due form

not many days after they met at Glenmore; which proposals were, without his being kept in suspense a single day, accepted by her,—perhaps you will therefore think scarcely in due form.

Before this event, it had been in Mrs. Northington's contemplation to leave London, and she was looking about for a house in the country. She would very gladly have taken New Lodge; but since, in learning that it was to be let, she also learnt that one of the Armstrong family was about hiring it, she would not think of entering into a competition with him. In consequence of the new connection she was about to form, other objects than merely her own inclinations were to be taken into consideration in fixing her future residence. She frankly owned to Mr. Armstrong, that there were associations in her mind connected with Langham, which would make the living there not altogether agreeable to her; and she expressed a strong wish that, unless he was particularly attached to the place, and particularly desirous of continuing there, they should endeavour to find a house suited to them within thirty or forty miles of London.

Mr. Armstrong replied, that he certainly should not quit Langham without some feelings of regret, but that wherever she wished to fix,

there he should be the most happy: one thing only he had to say, and that was, that the living must in such a case be wholly resigned, as he could not in conscience retain the emoluments of it without performing the duties. To this Mrs. Northington most readily assented, observing that her own fortune was so ample that the emoluments would really be no object to them, she had sufficient to support them all in affluence; she even thought, she said, that it would be hardly right to retain the preferment, since it would be withholding it from some other person, who not being equally well provided for had a better claim to it. To such a sentiment Mr. Armstrong was not a man who could hesitate in giving his entire assent; he was indeed even more charmed than ever with his Anastasia, on finding her capable of entertaining it. It was therefore settled that the living was to be resigned, and that Mr. Armstrong should at his return notify his intended resignation to Mr. Conway. No time was positively fixed, before they parted, for the marriage being concluded, but it was agreed that it should not be delayed longer than was indispensable for arranging the necessary preliminaries.

While things were going on thus prosperously with the father, I received the following

letter from the son, written within a week after his arrival at Glenmore.

'My dear Sam,

'Behold me once more, for the five hundred and fiftieth time in my life, you may perhaps say, desperately in love! Yes, Sam, desperately so indeed! This, however, is not, properly speaking, a new passion, it is rather an old one revived. More than four years are now elapsed since I told you of a very delightful creature with whom I danced a great part of the evening at a private ball to which I accompanied my aunt and cousin Shelburnes. I then said, as I well remember, and I dare say you have not forgot, since I am afraid, Sam, my levities have often given you too serious uneasiness to be readily forgotten,—I then said that she had nearly seized upon a corner of my heart, and that I could not answer for the consequences if it should ever be my lot to become further acquainted with her. My adverse stars had always opposed themselves to a second meeting, till now a very singular combination of circumstances has brought it about.

'But whither am I wandering?—I know not how it is that I have entered upon this subject in a style so light and airy, so much as if I was still trifling, still amusing, or perhaps I

should rather say plaguing you, with one of those flights of folly by which you have been so frequently vexed and tormented. The name of Louisa Elliott,—for it is of her I am sure you will see at once I am speaking,—that name carries with it a thousand associatious which ought rather to fill my soul with seriousness and sadness, a thousand recollections which never ought to present themselves to my mind unaccompanied with feelings of the deepest remorse and self-reproach. Sam, though I never saw her from that time till the present moment, it was scarcely a year after that we were brought again into each other's notice, under circumstances the most disadvantageous on my part, the most advantageous on hers. Well do I recollect how, in the anguish of my heart, I then expressed a wish that I had never known more of Louisa, rather than have been led to hearing of her again by causes so fatal.

'Good Heavens!—when, in telling you of my first rencontre with this charming girl, I lightly described Mrs. Northington her protectress as a *widow bewitched*; how little did I suspect all that I have recently learnt with regard to her! Since we last parted, my father has made me acquainted with the singular and interesting particulars that attended his marriage. I cannot say how much I was affected by them. I

could not hear them without abundance of tears. My poor father!—my poor mother!—though gratified by the confidence my father has placed in me, I had rather not have known that I owe my birth to so unfortunate an union; I seem to myself as if I were but an intruder into society, as if I never ought to have been here. These particulars I find have long been known to you. They were imparted to me in consequence of my father's being desirous, from the reports made to him by Mr. Anderson of Mrs. Northington's favourable dispositions towards him, of renewing his addresses to her. Yet, with the more than paternal kindness which I have ever experienced from him, he would not think of making such an important change in his situation, without first assuring himself that it might be done without giving me pain.

'Shall I say that I almost dreaded the sight of Mrs. Northington?—Yes, I did indeed: it seemed as if she could not possibly look upon me with tolerable complacency, it seemed as if the recollection of the poor mother must make the sight of the son infinitely painful to her. Yet, notwithstsnding these feelings, I thought her even at first sight a most charming woman; I think her more and more so every hour, nor can wonder at the attachment my father has

always borne her. Yes, Sam, I was for some days made really very miserable by the relation I had heard; but my father's kindness, and the charms of the society I am in here, have dissipated the gloom, and I am ready to bless any circumstances that have brought me to a more intimate knowledge of Louisa.

'Is Katherine then,—your Katherine, as I now more than ever exult in considering her,—is she, you will perhaps ask, so soon forgotten?—No, Sam, forgotten she can never be; I shall ever remember her with the warm affection of a relation: but I am now sensible that the attachment I bear her, though I once fancied it love, is very different to the sentiment which binds me to Louisa. You often used to joke with me about the inflammability of my heart, till my unfortunate affair precluded jokes upon the subject. But I do assure you that my present feelings are very different from those transient sallies which deserved only to be made the subject of your satire: never I think can they be changed, never lessened: on the contrary, I feel assured that they will uniformly increase in proportion as I grow more acquainted with this beloved object. Do not, however, suppose that I have the least idea of making at present any serious declaration of my sentiments; you alone will be for a long time to

come the confident of them. I feel that I love her sincerely, I feel satisfied that I ever shall love her; but my heart, I know, is volatile; it has hitherto been so unsteady that no dependence could be placed upon it, and I am determined that it shall undergo a severe probation before I suffer myself to speak. I have imposed it as a law upon myself to be silent for a year. Living constantly with Louisa, as I shall do in consequence of my father's marriage with Mrs. Northington, I shall have an opportunity of knowing thoroughly her character and disposition; and if at the end of a year I feel the same sentiments as at this moment, I shall indeed hope that I am no longer the same volatile creature I have been, but that I am becoming in some degree worthy to assume the character of a husband.

'Sam, this may seem an extraordinary manner for me to express myself, considering how short a time has elapsed since I made a serious offer of my hand to Katherine. I do think indeed, that the making such an offer was an unaccountable freak on my part. I cannot imagine what I proposed to myself, supposing it had been accepted; for I certainly intended to have urged the speedy conclusion of the affair, without any consideration how we were to live, without any idea of waiting till pru-

dence could sanction the union. In short, nothing can have been more wild, more without rhyme or reason, than my sallies hitherto in this way: it remains to be seen whether I have any foundation for the confidence I now feel in myself. My probation over, it will then appear whether Louisa is the person to whom that fate which seems to preside over all matrimonial alliances has destined me;—whether she is to be the person who will forbid my heart ever to rove more. If she be, I pray most sincerely that she may find as faithful a husband as you, I have no doubt, will vouch you have ever found a friend in

'Yours most truly,

'WALTER ARMSTRONG.'

"And surely," I said within myself, as I read the letter over and over again, "his heart is really fixed, and he will rove no more. Surely he will adhere to the silence he has imposed upon himself; the very idea speaks an altered and a more steady mind. Then if he can obtain such a victory, and at the expiration of the term finds his sentiments still the same, I shall no longer have any doubt that he may at length be trusted." In any case, the letter set my heart entirely at rest. If sometimes I had been disposed to feel not perfectly easy in the apprehension lest I had really been an obstacle

to his happiness, from the preference with which I was honoured by Katherine, I was now fully satisfied that, if his passion for her had not been, as he himself represented it, a mere wild sally, he could not so soon have been, even in idea, devoted to another. Satisfied in this assurance, nothing like the least portion of allay to the happiness I had in prospect now remained; but I had soon to find that, even great as it was, it was capable of increase.

Mr. Armstrong, on his return to Langham after nearly a fortnight's stay at Glenmore, immediately waited on Mr. Conway, who was then down, to communicate his intended resignation of the living. Much regret was expressed by the worthy squire at losing the society of a neighbour and friend for whom he had so high a value, nor less for the loss of a pastor to whom he considered himself as under great obligations for the more than common care he had taken of his flock, and for the regularity and good order which had in consequence been so long established in the parish. "My regrets," he continued, "Mr. Armstrong, would be still greater, were it not in my power to give you a successor worthy of you; one who, educated under your own eye, will I trust tread in your steps, so that I shall find no other alteration except that the

machine will be moved by different hands; its course will still continue the same. You will probably not have any difficulty in guessing the person to whom I allude. I understand, my dear sir, that the former object of your kindness, your pupil young Danville, has at length determined upon taking orders. It was my fixed intention, from the moment I heard it, that the first vacant preferment I had to dispose of should be given to him: your resignation will make that vacancy, and I shall not depart from my intention. You will perhaps oblige me so far as to retain the living till he is of age to take it, which I understand he will be in two or three months."

Mr. Armstrong was so kind as to express infinite satisfaction at what he heard, and assured Mr. Conway that he would not quit the cure till it was to be resigned into my hands. He only asked whether he might impart the welcome intelligence to me and to my father, and received full authority to do so. It may perhaps be thought rather odd in Mr. Conway, to give away a valuable living a second time without any other views than that he conceived he was promoting the good of the parish. But it is my business to record the matter as it actually happened, however strange it may make my patron appear in the eyes of the world. It can-

not even be said in excuse for Mr. Conway, that he secured a vote in the county by this step, for my father was not a freeholder; and in giving me the presentation to the living, nothing like a hint was given that mine was to be at his disposal. But Mr. Conway is an odd man.

In consequence, then, of the authority given him, Mr. Armstrong wrote to me at Cambridge, announcing his own intended marriage, and resignation of the living, and the successor destined him by his patron; carrying the letter, before it was dispatched, to show it to my father, and put him in possession of the joyful news. His raptures upon the occasion are much more easily imagined than described; they were indeed far too mighty to admit of their being expressed for a long time in any way but by tears; and when the power of speech returned, the first use made of it was to utter a pious ejaculation of gratitude to Heaven for happiness, for benefits, so unlooked-for. But raptures as well as courtships are rather dull and monotonous; pass we, then, any attempt at giving those of my father under an embodied form. We have had raptures sufficient described already, and it would be difficult to give variety to any new descriptions. Sorrows have in this respect a vast advantage over joys, that they will admit of an infinitely greater di-

versity of eloquence in the picturing them, and will therefore bear much more frequent repetition.

> "Nature a thousand ways complains,
> Describes by various sounds her pains;
> Yet for her laughter has but three,
> 'Tis all comprised in ha! ha! he!"

says the excellent old quatrain; and it is probably owing to this superior facility in nature to give variety to her expressions of sorrow,—for variety, we all know, is the life and soul both of writing and painting,—that authors and painters are so much agreed in generally selecting subjects of sorrow rather than of happiness for the exercise of their pens and of their pencils. To me my father's delight was poured out in the following letter:

'My dear Sam,

'This is with mine and your dear mother's kind love, and we send a thousand thousand blessings upon you; for never, sure, was such joyful news as Mr. Armstrong has just now been telling us. Who could ever have believed, five years ago, when you said, Sam, that you never could fancy being a clergyman, which to be sure I always thought that was very particular of you, because you know I could not tell then what a liking you had to Miss Kitty; but nobody ever could have hoped then that

you should be so changed by this time, and that now there should be a living ready for you the moment you are able to take it. Which I think there never was more extraordinary goodness than for Mr. Conway to bestow such a favour upon you; and of all the things in the world, there could not be greater joy to me than your having the living of Langham. I mean because it is not on account of the death of Mr. Armstrong; for then, I am sure, there could have been no joy, but the greatest sorrow. However, since it is only that Mr. Armstrong is going to marry a very rich lady,—and they say, besides, that he has always had a great kindness for her, which it must therefore be great happiness for him, and every body that knows him must be quite delighted,—therefore there is no cause for sorrow that he is to leave Langham. For this reason, I think, there never could be greater happiness than for you to have it, which if you were to be made a bishop at last, I don't think Hannah and I could be more overjoyed. This was a thing we never could have thought of, for who could expect such good luck as that Mr. Armstrong should not want the living any more? But as to being a bishop, though it is a very fine thing, they are not always the most happy that are the greatest; and two such pieces of good luck have befallen

you, to marry Miss Kitty and to have this living, that 'tis my thought it would be quite presuming to look to any thing more; for you know an unsatisfied mind cannot be pleasing in the sight of God. Therefore, Sam, I shall never think about bishoprics and such kind of things any more; only, if it should please God to send them quite unexpected, as he has sent all these blessings, nobody could be more thankful than Hannah and I should be.

'Well, Sam, I have always said that if people will but be resigned, and wait God's good time, and not be obstinate and self-willed, there's no knowing what may come at last, and how things may turn out with all possible good luck when we least think. I was, God knows, mortal vexed when you would not be a clergyman; which I do believe, if it had not been for all the goodness of Mr. Armstrong, in talking to me, and explaining what was right, and I think there never was a man could talk better, and no wonder, so learned as he is; but when he says a thing, somehow you don't know how to help thinking that 'tis true;—and I do believe, if it had not been for his talking to me, and saying so many wise things, aye, and kind things too, that I never should have consented to your going to the coal-trade, but

forced you to go into the church, which then I should have had a good right to expect that God would punish me; and perhaps, though you were a clergyman, no such good luck would have happened as that you would have got a living, much more a bishopric. Or who knows but it might have pleased God that you should die with vexation at being so crossed? and then I am sure I should have died too, for I could never have forgiven myself.

'But now that I followed Mr. Armstrong's good advice, and waited God's good time, and let you go your own way, without vexing and crossing you, all has come at last as I wish, and it is impossible to thank God enough that he was pleased to make me right minded and do my duty; for never was greater happiness than I shall have now in my old age, to hear you preach every Sunday in Langham pulpit. Which, Sam, I am thinking to look out for some texts of Scripture, such as will suit to make an anthem against the first time you preach after you are rector. And Mr. Armstrong, he knows Salisbury organist very well: so, perhaps, he would have the goodness to get him to set the anthem for me; and I'd take care and have the greatest band to perform it that I've ever had, even when Mr. Armstrong

was married, which then I thought, however, we did not do much amiss. So no more at present from,

'Dear Sam,

'Your ever loving father and mother till death,

'ROBERT and HANNAH DANVILLE.'

As to myself, nothing could be more flattering or gratifying to me than this appointment. It was highly flattering as a testimony of approbation of my character and conduct, from one of whose esteem any body might indeed fairly be proud. It was highly gratifying, since I and my beloved Katherine would not now be wholly dependent upon the bounty of another; and I could reflect, that it was not an absolutely destitute being on whom she would bestow herself. I expressed to Mr. Conway my deep sense of the obligation, in a letter which I had the satisfaction of hearing he afterwards mentioned to Mr. Armstrong in very flattering terms.

CHAPTER XVI.

Being the concluding chapter of the whole work.

WELL, reader, I think we are now arrived at the precise point when it is generally understood between historians and biographers, and their readers, that it is time for the former to think of winding up and concluding their narratives. No historian is expected to carry his relation beyond the period when he can leave the personages whose adventures he has been recording, in a state of happiness; and as we are all now happy, or at least on the point of being made transcendently so, and I do not make any pretensions to striking out new ideas in historical composition, but only desire to follow the old beaten track, I think it proper here to wind up.

Let me then concisely inform you, that on the division of the term at Cambridge, I returned to Langham, having been already ordained a deacon, and from Mr. Armstrong's pulpit, on the following Sunday, my father heard me deliver my first sermon: on this occasion, I believe he could fairly have joined in singing the *Nunc dimittis.* I own that I was so much affected in thinking upon my own

situation, and of the honest exultation of his heart, that it was not without difficulty I went through the service. He and my mother were invited to celebrate the event by dining at the rectory; but my father's joy was too mighty to admit of his being eloquent, I scarcely ever knew him on any occasion so taciturn. He had now for the first time in his life treated himself with an entire new suit of black, and my mother made her appearance in a brown silk gown, which uncle Ethelred, on his return from London, brought her as a present. Indeed the good old Baucis and Philemon looked exceedingly spruce and trim, nor could they help every now and then contemplating with evident complacency the respectable appearance each made in the eyes of the other.

This was in the month of June; in July I completed my twenty-fourth year, when Mr. Armstrong's resignation was formally given in, and I was put into full possession of the living. He remained at Langham about a month longer, to finish his concerns, and settle me in the house; and as the first act of professional duty which he had performed in the parish was to unite the hands of my father and mother, his last was to join those of Katherine and myself. He left me the house exactly in the state which he had inhabited it, desiring that he might

contribute so far to the establishment of his nephew and niece; he also left me the parish library, recommending me to continue employing it in the same way that he had done. The day following our marriage, he and Walter set off for Glenmore, whither in about ten days after Katherine and I were summoned, as at parting he had advertised us we should be, that I might perform the same friendly office for him, which he had so recently performed for me. The first marriage ceremony then at which I officiated was the uniting him to Mrs. Northington.

As no change had been made by all these occurrences in uncle Ethelred's desire of passing the remainder of his days with his adopted daughter, and as my residence was now necessarily fixed at Langham, he of course intimated his wishes that it should be his residence also, and here he has been established ever since. As his inhabiting New Lodge was therefore out of the question, Mrs. Northington, or rather Mrs. Bernard Armstrong as she must now be called, was gratified by having an opportunity of hiring it. She with her excellent husband, her fair *protégée*, and my friend Walter, were consequently soon fixed there.

Reader, these transactions took place in the

summer of 1806,—I now write in that of 1811. —I have been at this moment five years the happy husband, I may truly say, of one of the best of women, and am the happy father of three very fine children; the two eldest boys, the last a charming little girl. Uncle Ethelred sometimes jokes with me, and says that I am a strange mortal, for after five years' marriage, I am, if possible, more of a lover than ever. Indeed I should be the most ungrateful of men if I were not so, for never had any one more truly reason to say with Lord Lyttleton:—

He, only he, can tell, who match'd like me,
If such another happy man there be,
Has by his own experience tried
How much the WIFE is dearer than the BRIDE.

Yes, my father has had the delight of dandling three grandchildren upon his knees, and looks forward to a large multiplication of these blessings; nor are the transports he experiences, when kissing and blessing them, increased in a trifling degree by the reflection that at the same time that they are his grandchildren, they are also the grandchildren of Miss Eleanor, and the great nephews and niece of the worthy rector to whom he owes such deep and lasting obligations.

Mr. Conway was so obliging, upon my coming to the living, as to let a long lease of the

house, which my father had so many years inhabited, with the addition of a few acres of land round it; and uncle Ethelred took upon himself the ordering and executing of such alterations and improvements as he thought expedient to make it a proper residence for the father and mother-in-law of his niece; nor would it be easy to find a more neat, snug, and comfortable little mansion. A pretty little lawn and shrubbery, terminated by a clear rivulet, ornament the front of the house, and behind is an excellent *jardin potager*, which my father and mother both take great delight in cultivating. The blacksmith's shop was immediately given up to two very industrious young men, who had for some time worked with my father: he only makes it a visit now and then, to see how things are going on: "For you know, Sam," he says, "as they are young, they might not get on so well if I did not look a little after them. 'Tis kind to them; for, if they should not do their work so well as it used to be done, nobody could be expected to employ them."—He recently amused me very much by observing, that my eldest boy was now of an age when there was no saying what fancies children might not get into their heads, and he would advise me therefore to take great care that he should never go near

the blacksmith's shop; "for you know, Sam, how fond you used to be of it yourself, and it would be a mortal pity indeed if the child should get a like fancy."

My mother also made over her shop to a young couple then recently married; and she equally goes every now and then to pass an hour or two there, and gives them her advice, instructing them in the methods she took to render it so profitable. A very nice poultry yard forms a part of my father's premises; and here my mother continues to feed poultry for the supply of her own table and ours, and we are indeed very plentifully supplied. She thinks this better, she says, than our keeping them ourselves; for, as her daughter-in-law was not much used to things of that kind when she was young, she cannot be expected to know much about them; and as to the children, they can come and see the little chickens and ducks as often as they please.

Uncle Ethelred, who considers himself as a second grandpapa, often carries the babes himself to visit grandpapa and grandmamma Danville; for he says it is great nonsense that they must always have a nursery-maid with them,—surely their grandfathers and grandmothers can take as good care of them as their maids. These visits commonly end in very long con-

versations between the two grandpapas, who are certainly both very fond of talking. The East Indian traveller relates all the wonders he has seen, and all the extraordinary adventures which have befallen him, to the no small astonishment and entertainment of his auditor, whose own travels never extended further than to London and to Brighton. The latter is more particularly delighted, if, in the relation of these eastern adventures, he discovers any traces of modern customs that bear ever so trifling an analogy with what he reads in Scripture. My father's love of reading continues unabated, and his winter evenings are principally occupied with books, particularly with his favourite study the Scriptures. As, however, from the length of time that he has devoted a large share of his attention to them, nothing new is now to be learnt from the books themselves, he has lately taken a good deal to the study of the commentators upon them. But since these sort of works are commonly very much encumbered with Greek and Latin quotations, before he ventures to attack them, they are put into my hands to write down the translation in the margin.

Sophia Carberry is now twelve years old, and a very fine girl. She is often with her uncle and aunt Bernard; and the two last win-

ters they have taken a house in London for some months, that she might have masters in dancing, music, and other accomplishments proper to be acquired by a young woman who is to inherit so good a fortune. This, Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Armstrong were so good as to take upon themselves, well knowing that it was scarcely in the power of her guardian, Katherine, to have done it. Edward has remained my pupil, and in due time is to be removed to college.

At the end of Walter's year of probation, I had another letter from him, in which he assured me that his passion for Louisa was no otherwise changed than that it had been constantly increasing; he did not, however, yet feel sufficient confidence in himself to venture upon a declaration of his sentiments, though he trusted that at last the affair would end as he wished. It was not till two years after that it was brought to a conclusion. He then said that he felt assured of his affections being for ever fixed, and that he might safely take upon himself matrimonial fetters. It was a match too conformable to the wishes of all parties to meet with any opposition; and just three years after I had united the father and mother, I had the happiness of uniting the son and daughter. Considered from the moment of his father's

marriage, as his mother-in-law desired he might be, as joint heir with Louisa to her fortune, it was no longer necessary for Walter to think of going into any profession, so that the uneasiness which his father had experienced upon this account was entirely at an end. Mr. Anderson having died about a year before Walter's marriage, leaving all his property to his niece, Glenmore Cottage of course devolved to her. This, she, with her husband's approbation, presented to Mr. and Mrs. Walter Armstrong, and there they now live with the addition to their family of a very fine boy.

Walter amuses himself with planting, with gardening, with reading, and, above all things, with the old objects of his delight, drawing and painting. To these, when he had fully recovered the unhappy affair that first occasioned his disgust with them, he returned with an ardour which seemed to have increased ten-fold in consequence of this temporary alienation. He plants his trees picturesquely; and if they are not picturesque enough, transplants, and replants them, till he is perfectly satisfied; and before his babe was fairly a month old he had painted his picture. Nor has he been unmindful of me and my babes. He and his amiable wife recently left us after a stay of six weeks; during which he sketched a picture,

which he carried away with him to finish, of the rectory at Langham, with the rector, his wife, their three babes, and uncle Ethelred, all picturesquely disposed upon the lawn before it, and a most interesting picture it promises to be. He is the same kind-hearted, affectionate, sweet-tempered creature that he ever was; but he says, that though tolerably steady as a husband, he is not yet enough so to trust himself with the education of his own children; so he shall send his boys to me as soon as they are old enough to want instruction: as to his girls, they never can be in better hands than Louisa's.

Reader, if thou hast a taste for pure and tranquil happiness, thou wilt enjoy the several pictures sketched in this last chapter, and we shall part, I hope, mutually pleased and satisfied. If thou art desirous of seeing those in whose company thou hast been travelling for so long a time raised at last to greater honours and distinctions, I am sorry I cannot satisfy thee, for indeed none are in more exalted situations than those I have described. Even I am not yet a bishop; though my father, having seen so large a portion of the aërial castles of his youth realized, and become more solid fabrics, still I suspect hopes, notwithstanding the protestations he has frequently made that he is perfectly satisfied with my present situation, to

see my head, before he dies, encircled with a mitre. If ever this should indeed be the case, then, reader, mayst thou be assured that thou shalt hear of me again; and upon the faith of this promise let us for the present shake hands and bid each other farewell.

THE END.

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